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Glen A. Pierce

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evangelical

VISITOR

January 1995



Special People



Nancy and Mark Garis

Mark and Nancy Garis have endeared themselves to many people. They've lived full, busy lives, but always had time to be involved in many helping ministries. Mark retired as an elementary school principal in 1993, but recently accepted a four-year contract as superintendent of the Souderton (Pa.) Area School District. Nan led a nursery school in their home for many years. She is presently teaching transitional first grade in public school.

They are parents of two grown children, Jeff (associate pastor of the Souderton congregation) and Kristin (a reading teacher), both of whom live in nearby Telford. Jeff and his wife Beth have given Mark and Nan a grandson, Wesley.

Church life has been important to both Mark and Nan. Their nearly 30 years of service as a deacon couple in

the Souderton congregation have provided many opportunities for them to touch a host of lives. Often they challenged their church family to get involved beyond itself in different service projects.

Over the years, Mark has served on numerous regional church boards and committees. At the denominational level, he served on the Board of Administration and is now a member-at-large of the General Conference Board.

For many years Mark and Nan have enjoyed a "hospitality ministry" as MCC trainees from different cultures have experienced the hospitality of the Garis home. Among them have been some of our own young people from African Brethren in Christ churches. One year, traveling in Africa on a mission-sponsored trip, they were privileged to meet several former trainees and their families, including one of their "daughters" and her husband-to-be. Delivering Nan's remodeled wedding dress to be worn at her wedding was a special treat.

This past school year Mark and Nan committed themselves to parenting two Hispanic brothers from the Church of the Rock in Brooklyn, New York. Noel attended the Christopher Dock Mennonite High School, while Juan went to Pennridge, the local public high school.

For a couple who lives on the cutting edge, it will be interesting to see what new and exciting things come into Mark and Nan's lives as the Lord continues to lead them in ministry.

Submitted by Esther Byers, West Milton, Ohio, who had the opportunity to work with Mark and Nancy during the years that her husband John and she served as the pastoral couple for the Souderton congregation.

"Special People" profiles a wide variety of Brethren in Christ members of all ages and from all walks of life.

👉 You are invited to submit a short article about some "Special Person" you would like to introduce to Visitor readers. Articles should be typewritten, preferably 300-400 words, and must have the approval of the person being profiled. If your article is accepted for publication, we will contact you to secure a photo for publication (which will be returned).

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FEATURES

- 4 **Rumors of angels** Timothy Jones
- 6 **A job description for angels** Andrew J. Bandstra
- 9 **Running on empty** Gina Lee
- 10 **Failure is not a terminal illness** Luke Keefer Jr.
- 12 **Biblical case studies in failure**
- 14 **Marriage and the special-needs child**
Nancy O. Wilson
- 16 **A holy hush at Eventide** Trudy McClane
- 17 **Faces I won't forget** S. Paul Sides

DEPARTMENTS

- | | | | |
|----|---------------------------------|----|-----------------------------|
| 2 | Special People | 28 | Dialogue |
| 18 | God at work in our world | 28 | Readers Respond |
| 20 | Church News | 29 | Onesimus |
| 21 | E.V. Timelines | 30 | Focusing our Mission |
| 24 | Money Matters | 31 | Editorial |
| 26 | Messiah College News | 31 | Pontius' Puddle |

NEWS

- 19 **North American Congress: The Church and the Age Wave**
- 25 **High marks for MCC from magazine, other charities**

Books, movies, seminars—
why is our culture so fascinated by

Rumors of Angels?

by Timothy Jones

Americans are talking about angels. More than ever, it seems, people entertain stories of the odd and remarkable:

- “The angels are opening to us as never before,” exult the authors of *Ask Your Angels*, a book published and promoted by Ballantine, one of New York’s biggest houses. “Something profound is on the move.” The authors present the channeled wisdom of Abigraël, a genderless being they claim was sent to instruct them. They also lead New Age-flavored workshops on getting in touch with “celestials” and aligning with “angelic energy fields.” Conversing with angels, they write, is another “divination tool.” Knowing that many readers face major decisions, the authors give instructions on making a deck of “Angel Oracle” cards.

- In the movie *Grand Canyon*, Kevin Kline plays a Los Angeles businessman on his way to a meeting on Wilshire Boulevard’s “Miracle Mile.” Worried, absorbed, he stepped off the curb when, he tells a friend, “a stranger grabbed me, yanked me back, just as a city bus went flying by my nose.” Turning around, he thanked the young woman who saved him from becoming “a wet bug stain on the front of the bus.” Then he noticed that she wore the cap of his favorite baseball team since childhood—the Pittsburgh Pirates. “Was that a real person,” Kline’s character muses, “or was that something else—you know, sent from somewhere else?”

- Angel artifacts have become big business with “heavenly profits,” asserts the *Los Angeles Daily News*. What with books, “angel catalogs, angel seminars, angel pins, angel newsletters and angel sightings,...it looks like the winged ones have left the cosmic back lot for the forefront of popular consciousness.”

A culture once prone to dismiss the supernatural as superstition is thinking twice. Erstwhile secularists make room for “spiritual forces.” Skeptics wonder if the cosmos is friendly after all. Across the spectrum, Americans wonder: Should we expect heavenly messengers and guardians to grace our daily lives?

The twentieth-century church may be caught off guard by the question. For all of our culture’s sometimes weird fascination with the topic, Christians have remained oddly silent. Angels may play well in venues of popular piety, but they do not inspire much serious theology. Few pastors preach on them. (In *Angels*, Billy Graham wrote that he had never heard a sermon on angels, despite having heard or read of “literally thousands” of personal accounts.) Millions do pick up Frank Peretti’s novels, where brawny angels slug it out with demons, but readers must sort out fact from fiction on their own. Indeed, *fallen* angels—Satan and his minions—excite more curiosity in the church than do those of the heavenly, wholesome variety. And while an occasional church member confides an angelic experience, it is usually done tentatively, in a quiet corner of the church.

A society bent on contact with the supernatural is threatening to outdo the church in asking and talking about angels. Who provides Christian guidance? To wrestle with angels raises three questions.



1. Why is our culture becoming fascinated with angels? Why all this “aerial commotion”?

Herbert Muschamp, writing on the “return flight” of angels in *Vogue* magazine, suggests

that "maybe it's an attempt to retain altitude at a time when culture is short on thrust."

Maybe so. Jack Simms of Baby Boomers Consulting in California predicted a few years ago that the "quest for spiritual meaning" would be among boomers' greatest concerns in the nineties. "They want to get in touch with the supernatural, and they will get in touch with it—somehow."

Teenagers tell a similar story. Gallup polls reveal that teen belief in angels has increased steadily from 64 percent in 1978 to 76 percent in 1992. That three out of four young Americans now believe in angels says something about a coming generation and its search for something beyond self to believe in.

This helps explain why Sophy Burnham's *A Book of Angels*, replete with story after story of angelic encounter, soared onto best-seller lists. Just as striking, hundreds of people, young and old, sat down to write Burnham of their own encounters. She gathered an assortment for her sequel, *Angel Letters*. Here stranded motorists tell of quiet figures appearing to help, only to vanish mysteriously.

A woman writes of a prized, lost necklace reappearing under inexplicable circumstances. The accounts evidence a marked determination to *believe*. Letter writers are quick to credit not chance or good fortune, but, oddly, *angels*. They long for the assurance that the cosmos is inhabited by forces that provide "loving protection," as Burnham says. They want to believe, in this lonely era, that beings exist who befriend and communicate.



Even among intellectuals, the notion of heavenly visitors strikes a responsive chord. Mortimer Adler, philosopher and editor of the Great Books series, tells how he gave a lecture under the auspices of the Aspen Institute for Humanistic Studies. His topic? Angels and angelology. "The announcement," he wrote, "drew an audience larger than any I have ever enjoyed in the last thirty years." The experience so moved him that he wrote a book on the philosophical significance of angels.

But this cultural fascination has a dark side. Books like *Ask Your Angels*, with its immersion in the occult and New Age, demonstrate that not all that purports to be angelic is necessarily Christian. Why else would we be warned that "Satan masquerades as an angel of light" (2 Cor. 11:14)? Why else would Paul caution the Galatian believers against "even an angel from heaven"

coming to preach another gospel?

Angels too easily provide a temptation for those who want a "fix" of spirituality without bothering with God himself. Some prefer shuffling a deck of "Angel Oracle" cards over reading the Bible or listening to sermons. They prefer God in celestial soundbites.

And the pragmatist in us likes to harness mystery to personal ends.

We want help from an angelic companion when pinned behind the wheel in an auto accident, perhaps, but get restive at the thought of opening up to the Sovereign who drew near in the Incarnation. Americans reach out to friendly spirits, not the Wholly (and Holy) Other. We want tamer divinities.

Yet our culture's angelic fascination opens a window of opportunity

A job description for angels

by Andrew J. Bandstra

One theologian has suggested that when we speak of angels, we should do so only "softly and incidentally." He meant that Christ, not angels, stands at the center of the biblical message.

I suggest, "softly and incidentally," that the Bible describes the work of angels in five ways:

Angels are God's messengers. The original Hebrew and new Testament Greek words for angel simply mean "messenger." The same words can designate human or divine messengers. We use the context to decide which is intended in a given passage.

Angels are *God's* messengers. That is why, in the Bible, the usual human reaction to angels was to be terrified—as were the shepherds in Luke—or to fall to one's face. Thus, the first words of the angel messenger were often, "Fear not." Angels terrify because they bear God's glory. Yet angels are not to be worshiped, a point made insistently in the Bible.

Angels praise God. We often think of angels as *singing* praise to God. Yet the Bible never explicitly says that. The New International Version does translate Revelation 5:11 as "in a loud voice they [angels] sang." But the Greek text literally says, "In a loud voice they *said*."

I know of only two possible exceptions. One is Job 38:7, which says that "the morning stars sang together." The verse may be using morning stars to refer to angels. The other exception may be Revelation 5:9, which says the 24 elders and the four living creatures "sang a new song." Theologians allow for the possibility, but by no means agree, that the creatures and elders could be angelic beings.

Angels exercise God's providential care. Guardian angels protect us. Psalm 34:7 affirms God's care through his angel, and Psalm 91:11 is familiar: "For he will command his angels concerning you to guard you in all your ways." This verse is familiar in part because the Devil

quoted a portion of it in his temptation of Jesus (Matt. 4:6). But while he rejected how the Devil used the verse, Jesus did not reject the truth of Psalm 91. In his obedience, Jesus did experience God's presence through the ministry of angels (Matt. 4:11).

Though they are our guardians, there is scant support in Scripture for the notion that each believer has her or his personal guardian angel. The two main texts, Matthew 18:10 and Acts 12:15, hardly warrant such a view. Yet it seems appropriate to think that God cares for us through angels. John Calvin maintained that God does so not because God needs angels but because we need them. We need them because they assure us that God exercises personal and powerful care over each one of us.

Angels encourage Christian obedience. Hebrews 13:2, 1 Corinthians 11:10, and Matthew 6:10 all suggest in different ways that the presence of angels encourages Christians to obey God.

Matthew 6:10 says, for example, "Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven." According to the Heidelberg Catechism (Lord's Day 49), this request means, in part, "Help everyone carry out [his or her] work . . . as willingly and faithfully as the angels in heaven." The willing, faithful service of the angels should inspire us as we seek to carry out our work for God.

Angels carry out God's justice. We sometimes think of angels as goody-goodies who are more interested in sentiment than justice. According to the Bible, that is not the case. Rather, angels carry out God's judgment (Matt. 13:41, 25:31). Furthermore, the New Testament declared that angelic beings were the ones who "spoke," "ordained" (RSV), and "put into effect" the law of God on Sinai (Heb. 2:2; Gal. 3:19; Acts 7:53).

God promised to send an angel before the Israelites to lead them out of Egypt, and then he warned them thus: "Pay attention to him and listen to what he says. Do not rebel against him; he will not forgive your rebellion, since my Name is in him" (Exod. 23:21). Here the angel clearly represents not so much God's mercy as God's law, order, and justice.



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for the church, which leads to a second question.



2. Just what are angels?

The Bible has much to say about angels, and, as significantly, *not* to say. Angels poke their celestial heads repeatedly into the scenes of Bible stories. Scriptures for Advent and Easter are filled with their appearances. So are the stories of the Exodus (where God sent an angel to lead Israel out of Egypt) or the conquest of Canaan. Angels receive special attention in the books of the Bible that narrate the great acts of God (Genesis and Exodus in the Old Testament, for example, or the Gospels and Acts in the New). A majority of New Testament books mention them in some way, and the word *angel* or its derivatives appear in Scripture almost 300 times.

Historic Christianity continued the biblical tradition with a flourish. "Angels [became] a fundamental topic," writes Mortimer Adler, for "such Christian theologians as Augustine,...Gregory the Great, Aquinas, Luther, Calvin, Pascal and Schleiermacher."

Angelology also flowered among seventeenth-century English Christians, Anglican and Puritan. In the late 1600s, when Puritan preacher Richard Baxter detected growing skepticism about the existence of angels and demons, he wrote *The Certainty of the Worlds of Spirits*.

The church's interest in angels informed much of the great poetry of the Judeo-Christian tradition—Dante's *The Divine Comedy*, Milton's *Paradise Lost*, Chaucer's *The Canterbury Tales*. And angels captured the eye of a host of medieval and Renaissance artists.

But while historic Christianity assumes that angels weave unmistakably in and out of the fabric of the world God has created, the Bible never aggrandizes them. The most common biblical terms used for angels in both Hebrew and Greek mean simply *messenger*. Angels are sent, and there is never any sense

IT IS INAPPROPRIATE for people to talk of angels independent of their experience of God in Christ. While God may send angels, gratitude must always be directed to God, the God we know in Christ. The greatest danger of the new wave of angel interest rests here.

that the messenger is more significant than the Sender. Their task is to carry the message or do the will of the God who sent them. *Twice* the angel messenger made clear to John in Revelation, "Do not do it [worship me]! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God!" (Rev. 19:10; see also 22:9).

That angels appear more in the narrative books of the Bible, as opposed to the more didactic or pastoral, suggests that the Bible cares more about what angels say or do than what they *are*. Even in the case of the mysterious winged beings called seraphim and cherubim in Ezekiel and Isaiah, we learn more about their function (guarding God's throne and communicating to mortals) than about their essence. Indeed, while the intertestamental period saw an explosion of speculation about angels under Persian and Greek influences, the New Testament kept its reporting restrained, manifesting little interest in detailed hierarchies. Christ was always center stage; angels performed only supporting roles.

The Bible is notable in another way in its treatment of angels: Often they seem surprisingly everyday, especially in the Old Testament. With centuries of artistic and literary embellishment in the back of our minds, we may think of chubby-cheeked, ethereal, and haloed beings. But the Bible often depicts

them in the guise of ordinary people. Consider the story of Abraham's three angelic visitors in Genesis 18: Three "men" show up while he sits at the entrance to his tent. The distinction between God's action and the angels is blurred to the point where they seem almost synonymous.

Early Christian artists took their cue from the Bible. In Christian art before the fifth century, angels look like everyday people. You know them as angels only by their role in the painting or icon. Here art imitates theology, for God never intended angels to be freelancers, or anything but servants.

Angels may strike awe and fear, as they did in their appearance to shepherds at Jesus' birth. And they speak with heavenly authority. But angels can never become a stand-in for God. Karl Barth once wrote that it is inappropriate for people to talk of angels independent of their experience of God in Christ. While God may send angels, gratitude must always be directed to *God*, the God we know in Christ.

The greatest danger of the new wave of angel interest rests here. The title of *Ask Your Angels*, for example, is no accident. "When you *Ask Your Angels*," the authors write in obvious allusion to Jesus' teaching about praying, "you can be sure that you will be answered." Where is the Sovereign of the universe in such vague attribution? God be-

comes but a shadowy, sideline figure; the real action is angelic.

Thus Paul's severe words to the Colossians apply: "Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen.... He has lost connection with the Head" (Col. 2:18-19). Paul faces off here against an incipient heresy that would allow the majestic God to be worshiped only in the form of angels he had created. A full-blown version of this heresy, called Gnosticism, later developed a list of spirit beings through whom God had to be approached. Paul would have none of it.

When people suggest relating to angels instead of God, they repeat and yield to the medieval Catholic temptation to multiply mediators. "There's Mary, the saints, now the angels," explains theologian J. I. Packer. "In the end, the glory of Christ is diminished."



3. Do angels still grace our daily lives? "Are there really forces," as Sophy Burnham puts it, "that dive, invisible, into our petty affairs?"

Scripture clearly stands on the side of those who believe angels move among us. All the cultural fascination is not false. All our longing to see God enter our tragedies and flat stretches is not vain. Angels may deliver a message from the realms of glory. Or they may work, unsung, unseen, in ways we can only begin to think about. Why else would the writer to the Hebrews tell first-century Christians to welcome strangers, for by so doing, "some have entertained angels without knowing it" (13:2)? And, he earlier asked, "are not all angels ministering spirits sent to serve those who will inherit salvation?" (Heb. 1:14). We cherish the Pauline insistence that no mediator stands between us and God, save Jesus. But we need not thereby conclude that God cannot use angelic means to accomplish his will.

A friend of mine, a prominent

WHILE we reject society's faddish sentimentalism surrounding angels, we must acknowledge that God can break through our routines in ways that leave us awestruck.

publishing executive, believes this. Several months ago, his uncle's wife of 50 years died. The family was worried about the elderly man's possible depression, and my friend felt he had better make a visit.

When he arrived, he found his uncle in the best of spirits. Surprised, he coaxed out the explanation. "I was in a black hole of despair," the uncle told him. "I couldn't sleep nights, and one night I was startled to find my bedroom blazing with light, emanating from a human-sized being standing by the foot of my bed. The light radiated from its face, hands, and garments. And then I felt the angel communicating to me. It conveyed a message of personal peace. Calmness overwhelmed me. I fell asleep knowing it was going to be all right." The uncle, a fervent evangelical believer, has been fine—and convinced about angels—ever since. So has my friend.

The editor of a leading magazine for church leaders, *Leadership*, tells how his young daughter lay comatose one night, on the edge of death. A hospital staff worker went by the room and saw angels "hovering" over the bed. The woman told the child's nurse that she wanted to renew her commitment to God in response. By morning, the daughter revived. The editor—whom associates know as no sentimentalist—

does not hesitate to believe that angels showed up.

Some will object, however, that most contemporary accounts contradict the biblical accent on angels as *message* bearers. These stories major on angels as guardians. Calvin Seminary New Testament professor Andrew Bandstra suggests a solution: The Spirit's presence in Christians, along with the Bible, makes less necessary the need for angels as messengers. "That is why," he argues, "most people now experience angels as ministers of God's providential care." Also, the stories of the prophet Elijah finding help from an angel as he fled Jezebel's wrath or Peter's angel-assisted prison break in Acts support the notion that angels do more than speak.

It will be argued by others that God usually employs "ordinary" means. Angelic visitation must be the exception. True enough. But if God has some cosmic "preferential option" for the unspectacular, he can still employ the extraordinary. Scripture is standing proof of that.

While we reject society's faddish sentimentalism surrounding angels, we must acknowledge that God sometimes intervenes in ways that beggar the imagination. God can break through our routines in ways that leave us awestruck. That may be through a still, small voice, or it may happen more dramatically. "One part of the created reality is the hosts of God," theologian Packer reminds us, "which include any number of angels."

Their appearances may be rare, but angels are no endangered species. They move and work still. And they have not stopped guarding us, as the psalmist says, "in all [our] ways."

Former associate editor of Christianity Today, Timothy Jones is the author of Celebration of Angels, published by Thomas Nelson. He lives in Nolensville, Tennessee.

**Thoughts
as we begin
a new year**

Running on Empty

by Gina Lee

The repair shop worked night and day to get the jet engine in running condition. Skilled mechanics checked and re-checked their work until they were satisfied with the job. Finally it was ready to be fired up in the test cell, the final check before it was ready for flight. Ten minutes after it started, it blew up. What went wrong? Upon examining the parts that were left, it was immediately obvious what went wrong.

The repair job was flawless, but all the pieces were bone dry. A two hundred thousand dollar engine was destroyed

because no one had remembered to put oil in it before turning it on.

Hopefully, most drivers know better than to try to drive around with the needle of their gas gauge pointing on "E." People who try to go a few more miles running on gas fumes are liable to find themselves stalled in the middle of a busy intersection. But we Christians are often guilty of running on empty, ignoring our gauges, and trying to make it on spiritual fumes.

When I have a day when everything goes wrong and I feel like moving into a cave as far away from the human race as possible, it's a good indication that I'm running low on fuel, or trying to start my engine without any oil. When I feel angry and impatient with my co-workers over the slightest mistake, when idle remarks I usually brush aside move me to tears, when depression settles around my soul like an ugly gray cloud, it's not food or rest that I crave most, but communion with God. Of course, physical ills can contribute to depression, but what I need most at these times is not found in a pharmacy but in prayer.

Diet clinics are full of unhappy

people who eat to fulfill their emotional hunger rather than their physical hunger. Some people find solace by burying themselves in their work. Others are in love with love and flit from relationship to relationship, searching for the perfect mate. I have tried to cope with emptiness in many different ways over the years. But the older I get, the more I realize that it is only God that can fill that empty space inside me.

A healthy relationship relies on communication, not memories of past closeness or feelings of affection. Some people, after the excitement of conversion dies away, treat Christ as they would old school buddies that they haven't kept track of. They remember their friendship with affection, and if they run into old pals by accident, they may feel a warm glow. But they make no effort to keep these relationships current.

When I see the warning signs of spiritual emptiness creep into my life, I stop what I am doing and pray. I pray about everything. I tell God what I hope will happen, and share with him my struggles to get along on this planet and make my life work successfully. Daily devotionals are a part of my life, but I find that praying at set times just isn't enough.

Most human beings possess the desire to avoid pain and seek pleasure. Advertisers know that the big question a potential client wants answered is "What's in it for me?" In the case of prayer, I find a lot in it for me. Talking with a living, vibrant friend and Savior fills my being with love, peace, and courage to keep on going no matter what the roadblocks I encounter.

Now that's something you can't find at a gas station.

"Yes, may you come to know his love—although it can never be fully known—and so be completely filled with the very nature of God" (Ephesians 3:19, TEV).

The author lives in Burbank, Calif.

Failure!



is not a terminal illness

by Luke Keefer, Jr.

Failure has a harsh sound to it in any language. The word strikes terror in the human heart, in much the same way as the word cancer evokes our worst fears.

SOMETIMES THE WORD FAILURE recalls the past. It may agitate a sense of guilt or bring to mind some painful situation which stunted growth. Sometimes it focuses upon the present and some area of our beliefs, practices, or relationships that is not being handled well. It can reach into the future, some anticipated or imagined situation that we fear will be too much for us to cope with. There is little doubt that failure—the sense that something has, is, or will go amiss—is a common human problem.

The problem has its religious dimension as well. What shall the Christian do when conscious of sin? How do we come to terms with

growth that is slower than we would like? How do we deal with the feeling that our best efforts in witness and service did not seem good enough? If I must experience suffering, persecution, or the frustration of difficult and unchanging circumstances, does that mean that God is angry with me or that I am not good enough to please God? At one time or another, a Christian might associate these thoughts with failure in the spiritual life.

Strange as it may seem, the fact that temptation and failure (in various forms) is the common experience of Christians is actually good news. It is good news because it means we are not odd, and our problems are not unique. Others have had to face simi-

lar situations in the past and are facing them in the present. We can learn from their failures, especially if we can discover how God helped them in the midst of their problems. Then we no longer feel alone and cut off from aid. How thankful we should be that the Bible records the failures of God's people as well as their successes. It is good to know that, in the midst of imperfections, we are still in the company of the saints.

Lessons from failure

Experience is the best of schools, though its tuition runs a bit high. Many of the lessons we learn come at great personal cost. But one must evaluate costs in terms of results.

Since the lessons we learn by failure have a way of sticking with us, perhaps the costs are well worth it. Israel, for example, seemingly could not learn how to stay away from the temptations of idolatry. So God sent them into exile in Babylon for seventy years. There they learned the lesson well. As a general rule, one can say that the Jewish people have withstood the temptation of idol worship ever since the bitter lesson of exile. Seventy years of suffering, compared to several thousand idol-free years, looks like a good investment in education.

God does not plan for us to fail. He can make use of our failures, however, to teach us some valuable lessons. God redeems situations as well as people, converting minus signs into plus factors. Note some of the things God can teach us through the things we call failure.

Realistic expectations

A common problem among Christians is that they expect too little of their life in Christ, and, consequently, live as weak Christians. Some Christians, however, have the opposite problem. They expect too much of themselves as Christians. They somehow think temptation will have no power over them. Or they believe their energy for service will never run low. Some expect their emotions to play only happy tunes, with no selections from the minor key. They believe they can find a way through every battle, coming through miraculously with no scars from the fight. The borderline between faith and fantasy is not clearly drawn for these believers.

Failure in many forms is inevitable for these people until they come to more realistic expectations of themselves and a more biblically informed basis of their faith. The Bible tells us that the godly will be subject to temptation, will experience the opposition of Satan, and will undergo persecution in one form or another. At the very least, we will carry the scars of these conflicts. And, if experience shows us anything, it is that no one is always a winner. Christian victory

God can make use
of our failures to
teach us some
valuable lessons.
God redeems
situations as well
as people,
converting
minus signs
into plus factors.

does not mean freedom from trial, nor even the guarantee of no defeats. Victory does mean knowing Christ's help in the midst of testing and his grace should we fail. In the history of organized baseball, there has never been a championship team that went through the entire season without a loss. Championship teams were winners in spite of their losses. The mature Christian, also, has learned how to absorb his or her losses and emerge a winner in spite of them.

Interruption of failure

We have all known teams that played very well until they suffered their first loss. After that they went into a spiral of defeat, losing to teams they should have been able to beat and committing errors they normally would not have made. The same thing often happens to people in general and to believers in their spiritual life. Failure seems to disorient and discourage, thus paving the way for a series of additional failures. Other persons, and other teams, seem capable of absorbing a failure and, after a temporary setback, come back as strong—or often stronger—than before. The difference is their ability to interrupt failure so that it does not become a habit.

One breach of conduct does not erase entirely one's Christian character. One of Satan's favorite tactics is to tell a fallen Christian, "See what a hypocrite you are. Now that you've

slipped, you might as well go and live like the sinner that you really are." He probably assailed Peter somewhat in that fashion, for Jesus had told Peter, "Satan has desired to have you that he might sift you like wheat" (See Luke 22:31). Peter, instead, was melted with repentance, for his denial of Christ was out of character with the real love he had for his Lord. David's acts of adultery and murder were out of character with his being "a man after God's own heart." Both of these Bible characters sought immediate restoration to God's favor. They knew they belonged to God and were determined that sin should not become a habit, separating them from God. The Bible is full of examples of God's forgiveness when his people confessed sin. It is when they added sin to sin that they came under God's severe judgment.

One of the best ways to interrupt failure is to confess it to another Christian. Our natural instincts when we sin are usually wrong. We tend to want to keep our failure secret, for fear that people will not think of us as highly as they previously did. We want to be alone in order to repair the damage at the least social cost. This, too, is how Satan uses failure to work further defeat in our lives. If one watches a predator attack a sheep, he will notice that it first isolates the sheep from the flock. Then the sheep is truly at the predator's mercy. The Bible counsels confession to one another (James 5:16). Sharing our defeat—even persistent failure with secret sins—frequently breaks the bond of that sin in our life. For when we sense the readiness of a brother or sister to forgive us and love us, we are enabled to believe that God's love surely outdistances theirs.

Self-discovery

As illness may force us to review our lifestyle, so failure calls us to evaluate our spiritual health. We learn to know our vulnerable spots and what we must do to protect ourselves against them. If the pressure of working with children brings us apart at the seams, we are not wise to seek an avenue of service in children's min-

BIBLICAL CASE STUDIES IN FAILURE

Abraham—If there is one virtue for which Abraham is remembered, it is his faith (Romans 4; Hebrews 11:8-19). But he was not always strong in faith. Twice he feared he would be killed so men could have his wife Sarah. So he said she was his sister, which was a half truth. In both cases God prevented the kings in question from committing adultery with Sarah, and she and Abraham escaped harm (Genesis 12:10-20; 20:1-18). When his faith for a son wavered, he accepted Sarah's suggestion and fathered Ishmael by her slave girl Hagar (Genesis 16). Yet God proved his faithfulness to Abraham and Sarah and gave them Isaac in their old age. By then Abraham had been "strengthened in his faith" (Romans 4:20). God's faithfulness carried Abraham through his faithless moments until Abraham's faith was so strong that he became the chief example of faith in the Bible. How good to know God did not abandon Abraham or His plans for him in the times of Abraham's weaknesses.

Elijah—Among the prophets of the Bible, Elijah stands out for his courage. He did not mind confronting the king and issuing him stern prophecies of judgment. On Mt. Carmel he took on the 450 prophets of Baal in a prayer contest and proved Jehovah to be the true God. Yet soon thereafter he was running for his life, in fear of the threat of Queen Jezebel. He was a classic case of prophet "burn-out." In his depression over the state of things, with the wrong side apparently winning, he felt he alone stood for God and prayed that he might die (1 Kings 19). God dealt gently with his dispirited prophet, knowing full well his failure stemmed more from physical fatigue and emotional exhaustion than it did spiritual rebellion. Soothed by the "still small voice" of God, Elijah was able to throw off his self-pity and return to the prophetic tasks with which God had charged him.

David—How much one wishes David's record did not include the events of 2 Samuel 11 and 12. Adultery and murder are so out of character for this man "after God's heart" (1 Samuel 13:14; Acts 13:22). Yet David's repentance for his evil was as thorough as any character of the Bible. In Psalm 51 we see why he was still "a man after God's heart." David accepted the responsibility for his sin even though he recognized its roots in the corrupted nature of his heart. He did not try to bribe God's favor with religious sacrifices. With brokenness of heart, he pleaded for God's forgiveness, his cleansing, and his restoration of the joy of the Holy Spirit. He did not let rebellion become a habit as Saul did; instead, he interrupted the failure of sin as soon as God convicted his heart of wrong-doing.

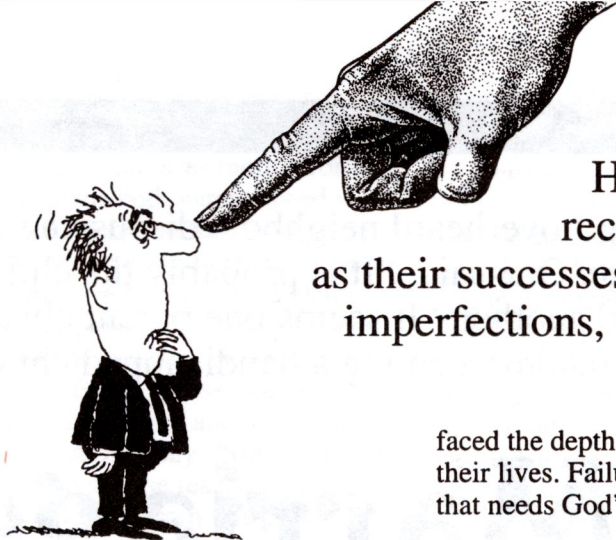
Mary and Martha—Scripture makes it quite clear that Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were personal friends of Jesus. He often must have enjoyed the hospitality of their home when he visited Jerusalem. Yet both Mary and Martha suffered a low point in their faith when their brother died. It seemed to them that Jesus' presence could have prevented Lazarus' death (John 11:21, 32). The anguished loss of a loved one raised inevitable questions, and they were unable to reconcile their belief in Jesus with the fact of

their brother's death. Jesus was grieved by their lack of faith, but he dealt gently with them as he always did with those who sorrowed and suffered. The net result was that they came to an enlarged understanding of the resurrection in the fact of Jesus' victory over death.

Peter—Peter's story of denying his association with Jesus is well-known. He overestimated the strength of his love for his Lord and underestimated the strength of temptation. Twice Jesus tried to avert this disaster for Peter. He warned Peter that Satan would try to sift him like wheat (Luke 22:31-32). Again, in the Garden of Gethsemane, Jesus told him to pray that he would not enter into temptation (Luke 22:40). Yet Peter and the others slept, oblivious to the hour that was fast approaching. Peter's lack of prayer and spiritual perception led to his downfall. But his repentance was immediate, sincere, and lasting. Likely with his own fall in mind, he wrote 1 Peter 5:6-11. Here he counseled humility, vigilance against one's adversary, and absolute trust in God's faithfulness to his children in the time of trial.

John Mark—John Mark's failure was that which one might expect of his youth. Perhaps he did not like the role of helper. He may have felt his gifts were not utilized and appreciated. Maybe he got tired of the routine. Possibly he was homesick. At any rate he left the missionary team to return home. Paul felt his defection disqualified him from further service. His uncle Barnabas believed he deserved another chance. John Mark made good of this second chance, so well in fact that later Paul himself was forced to concede that John Mark's service met even his high standards (2 Timothy 4:11). Frequently one's youthfulness—physical and/or spiritual—will result in imperfections of life or service. But the affirming adult who offers the second chance (and more) will find that God's veterans have grown up through repeated opportunities for growth.

Paul—Paul was one of Christ's most useful ambassadors of the New Testament age. But he knew his "down moments" as well as his times of elation. He had been granted unusual spiritual experiences in his encounter with Christ. God had worked wondrous miracles through his ministry as well. There is always the danger that persons like this can begin to think too highly of themselves, or that others may think too highly of them. In his "thorn in the flesh" experience, Paul realized both of these dangers (2 Corinthians 12:1-10). God did not answer his repeated prayers to be delivered from his difficulty, whatever it was. There was a more important lesson Paul needed to learn. In Paul's weakness, God's power could better be demonstrated, for when human ability and strength cannot be the source of victory, then God is acknowledged as the source of power and glory. Paul discovered, as many have since, that the greatest moments of growth and usefulness often come out of times of suffering, weakness, and brokenness. We discover more of the power of Christ's resurrection when first we share with him in the suffering of his death (Philippians 3:10-11).



How thankful we should be that the Bible records the failures of God's people as well as their successes. It is good to know that, in the midst of imperfections, we are still in the company of the saints.

istries. If we cannot resist sweets, we are foolish to take a job in a candy factory. The list is endless. But each of us must discover by experience our areas of strength and weakness. God will always make a "way of escape," but we must discover what it is and then use it (1 Corinthians 10:13 RSV). We will experience the same failures repeatedly in our lives unless we take to heart the things that failure clearly shows us about ourselves. We can learn to avoid specific failures.

There are times when failure points out a more general spiritual condition that needs correction. Sometimes we have been treating only symptoms of our spiritual illness and not the underlying cause. In that case God often allows failure to function like exploratory surgery. He uncovers our heart and shows us the source of the disease. We may discover an surrendered self at the center of our failures. It may be that we are carnally minded, controlled by desires contrary to the desires of the Spirit. When things were going at least fairly well in life, we were not concerned enough to seek God's best for us. But when we are wounded in spirit, broken-hearted over some serious failure, we become open to the deep working of God's Spirit in our innermost being. Then in the words of the Psalmist, we pass through the valley of Baca and make it a place of springs (Psalm 84:6). It is then that the pain of God's discipline results in the fruit of righteousness (Hebrews 12:11). Many a person has looked back at some painful failure in life and praised God for it. For apart from that discipline, they might never have

faced the depth of spiritual need in their lives. Failure can reveal a self that needs God's drastic surgery.

God's sufficiency

Every victorious Christian has learned the secret of trusting God. These people have discovered that God does not forsake us in failure, whether that be the failure of sin, of relationships, or of service. God is strong to forgive, to reconcile, to restore. God can handle our failures better than we can. It is our inactivity which frustrates the grace of God. He wants us to throw our energies into the adventure of discipleship. It is virtually impossible to keep your balance on a bicycle when it is standing still. But if it is moving, balance is quite easily maintained, although you will probably have to turn the handlebars some to do it. Likewise, God can guide and correct us while we're moving in our Christian life, but we lose our balance when we stand still. Trust gets us in motion for God and lets him keep us on course.

Difficulty and failure serve to underline Jesus' words in John 15:4-5, "Remain in me...for apart from me you can do nothing." The victorious Christians are those who have learned that their true strength comes from God. Like Paul's discovery through his "thorn in the flesh," they have come to realize that God's strength is most present when their strength seems to have forsaken them. It might be the trial of physical affliction, it might be the frustration of an impossible human circumstance, or it might be the disappointment that some area of service is stymied. When our trust is in God, songs of deliverance will ultimately break forth. Faith is a Christian's victory (1 John 5:4), and God will allow all kinds of experi-

ence—even failure—to come our way to purify and refine this precious commodity (1 Peter 1:6-7).

Children of the heavenly Father

Watching parents teach an infant to walk is a fascinating experience. At first they hold both hands. Then they hold one hand. Finally they step away several paces and, with outstretched arms, invite the child to come to them. The child responds to the challenge and toddles ever widening gaps to the support and affirmation of the parent. At times the child totters on the brink of falling, only to be rescued by the quick intervention of the parent. At other times he or she falls and is consoled by mom or dad before returning to the challenge. Failure is part of the process, but no wise and loving parent would discourage walking on that account.

The Christian life often seems like learning to walk. Just as Jesus invited Peter to walk the waves of the Sea of Galilee, so God invites us to walk toward him. We may fall, but he will be there to pick us up, just as Jesus rescued Peter when he began to go down. God so wants us to learn to walk that he is willing to risk our fallings. For if he cannot get us walking, we will always be oversized babies. We cannot develop Christian maturity without the risk of trying and, sometimes, the pain of failing. But in the joy of walking, going from strength to strength, we find we are "coming of age" as the sons and daughters of God.

*Luke Keefer Jr. is a member of the faculty of Ashland Theological Seminary, Ashland, Ohio. Adapted from **Everything Necessary: God's Provisions for the Holy Life**, published by Evangel Publishing House.*



One summer evening I overheard neighbors discussing the breakup of a marriage. One said, "It is probably the child." "Yes," said another. "It seems one parent always has trouble accepting a handicapped child."

Marriage and the special-needs child

by Nancy O. Wilson

Parents of disabled people have heard the reports that 75 percent of all marriages with handicapped children end in separation. Professionals who work with families, even guidance books for parents say it is almost inevitable. The problem is widespread. About one family in thirty has a handicapped child and the world population with Down syndrome tops six million.

MANY PARENTS SEPARATE. Others do not, yet older parents know more is involved than accepting a handicap, or focusing on one partner or one reason. When one's child is different, emotions are deeply experienced—some short-lived, some lasting a lifetime.

How can you expect to feel if your child was born with a handicap? As with any traumatic event, feelings of

denial, guilt, anger and fear are normal. A dimension of family pride is added, however, when one's child is not like the others. George Harris, whose daughter has a hearing impairment, says it is difficult to not link self-worth to the child's condition.

After shock and first tears, your healing begins with acceptance of sorrow. Although you mourn what might have been, you still love, enjoy, and appreciate your child.

You heal by eliminating guilt. Having a disabled child is nobody's fault. "Don't torture yourself by con-

tinuing to look for signs that it is God's judgment," says Irving Dickman in *One Miracle at a Time*. "What kind of God would disable a baby to get back at you?"

If parent reactions are complex, what are the stumbling blocks for couples with special-needs children? You've heard the rumors: the marriage was shaky in the first place, or one parent cannot accept the disability, or money is scarce. All of these problems contribute.

The intense care of infants or young children can result in marital

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distancing that arises out of mother's and father's responsibilities. A special child usually requires more effort, which means both parents need to make decisions and share the care. Whether your child is mildly or seriously impaired, you need to share your child, even if one of you works longer hours, or is home more than the other. Ellen, whose daughter is dyslexic and has an attention deficit disorder (ADD), says "Bob won't go with me to see the teacher. He is detaching himself from this problem."

Parents of special-needs children often feel so vulnerable, they find defense in detachment. Perhaps Bob distances himself out of fear that his ideas are unimportant or worse, inadequate.

He shouldn't. Parents' ideas are always important. Aside from major surgery, one decision will seldom irrevocably change a child or his future. Parents do make wrong decisions, but the greatest losses are in time and money.

ONE ANTIDOTE to marital distancing is to interrupt the stress of child care, even for 24 hours. When my disabled son and his brother were preschoolers, my husband and I arranged for a weekend away. I cooked, bought new toys, and wrote out instructions for every conceivable emergency. Then we discovered the sitter had forgotten the dates.

I was bitter at the denial of my much-needed rest. Frightened by my devastation, my husband called work colleagues and located another sitter.

The healing of your relationship is vital. You need to make time for each other—to heal wounds, to have fun, and to strengthen the marriage. This rest should not be given over to worrying about your children.

In *Families of Handicapped Children*, Marion Duckworth says you need to build a support system. "Do you have family or close friends who are at ease with your (child) and can help? What about people in the church? Be honest with the pastor or church leader about your situation. Contact your social workers, physician, physical therapist, or other par-

ents of handicapped children for direction."

Depending upon a child's impairments, parents typically see many specialists during the diagnosis and a search for therapy. A parent-support group may seem like one more meeting, but other parents can help you through rough times. When Todd was young, we attended lectures about special education. But what we really needed, and found, was help in managing an impulsive, overactive eight-year-old. One value of parent groups is discovering you are not alone.

When one's child is disabled, it is not so easy to distance ourselves from assaults on self-esteem, and thereby lies the crux of our pain. In Leo Buscaglia's book, *The Disabled and Their Parents*, Betty Lou Kratoville says no matter what others may think, parents have a huge emotional investment in their children. "True, they have been frustrated by behavior they could neither understand nor handle, have wept over the irrevocability of a diagnosis. One constant factor remains, and that is their love, undeniable, unwavering, un-turn-off-able."

Understanding and mourning a child's losses is like a great felled tree in a forest. No one feels the descent quite like you. Parents go through recognizable stages including confusion, nearly always grief, sometimes despair. Depending on the circumstances, some parents adjust to learning about the handicap in a few weeks or months. Others may take longer to heal. Parents who know or grew up with a disabled person may adjust easier. Parents with difficult memories of handicapped people may be deeply wounded for the same reason. For most parents, however, their child is the first disabled person they have known.

If you recently discovered your child's limitations, acknowledge your ambivalent feelings. How can you possibly adjust to what has happened, at least right away? In marriages that strengthen in the process, partners respect the different ways each responds to the crisis. Bette Ross in *Our Special Child* says husbands often feel their duty is to be a rock to

which the grieving wife can cling. "But a man is not a rock," says Ross, and wives understand how difficult it is for husbands to share grief.

BECAUSE YOU ARE HUMAN, you cannot expect disability involvement, even a child's measurable progress, to consistently reward you, and neither time nor temperament can predict coping. When therapy or educational intervention threatens to overwhelm your marriage, you have the right to stop for awhile. Tell specialists why you are doing so. Ask for help to reschedule your child's programs.

Life with your child is an intense blend of love and laughter, worry and frustration, but there is nothing you cannot overcome with insight into your feelings. At a local parent meeting, a young mother asked if parents ever get over their feelings. An older mother replied that grief fades in and out, "...but it is possible to feel both regret and delight in your disabled child as long as you live." You need to discuss loss, to explore individual breaking points, to understand that it is OK to sometimes resent the child. While you heal, verbalize words like "sorrow and pain," but use them in tandem with "love and faith."

The mother of a child with multiple handicaps says parents eventually locate the other side of grief. The end is not futility, but hope.

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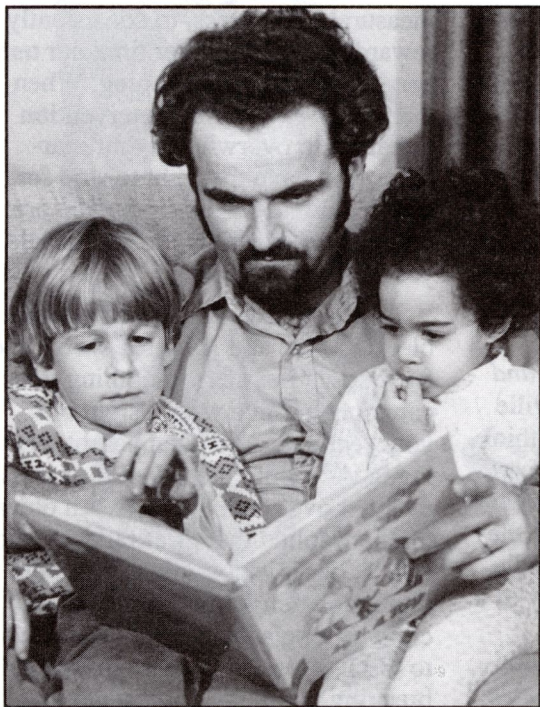
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A holy hush at Eventide

by Trudy McClane



One of the outstanding observations noted as Jack and I visit in the homes of our missionaries and national church leaders is the togetherness of the family. The children seem as happy (happier?) as any we know. They climb trees, roll old tire casings along the dusty path, and spend time selecting pebbles from a stream. They also read, read, read. Some express themselves in sketching, drawing, and painting. Why all the time given to these pleasures? One reason is the blessed lack of television.

Oh, a few could have a TV (and some do), but there is the discipline and determination by the parents to keep it off except for very special viewing, and it doesn't interfere with "back to Christian basics."

I saw in a tiny four-year-old the impact of living in a home where Mother and Dad place value on being consistent in family devotions. Let me tell you about it.

Caleb, younger son of Jay and Judy Smith, goes to school five full days a week. There is a law in the borough in London where they live which requires four-year-olds to attend school. Caleb had dark circles under his eyes, but early in the morning he was up and dressed. He had on grey flannel slacks, a blue oxford shirt with four-in-hand tie, grey "mens" socks and sensible shoes polished to a shine. With his blue blazer on, he could have been in an advertisement. He was beautiful. After breakfast, all of us drove to the school which he and his brother Eli attend. It

was an exhilarating scene. Children were from so many nationalities, languages, and cultures that it looked like a microcosm of the world. Judy spends several hours a week helping in many roles. This day she was one of the attending parents for a field trip for Eli's class.

I was back in their home to greet the boys and their mother about 4:30 p.m. As Caleb came in the door, I asked him, "Caleb, how was your day?"

His reply, "Aunt Trudy, today wasn't a good day at school."

Again, I saw the dark circles and my heart went out to this tiny cherub. That evening the boys sat at the table and did their homework. Yes, they both had homework. Finally, after going over the last spelling word, they ran to put on their pajamas. Then the boys sat close to their mother as she read a Bible story and had prayers together. It was a sacred time. A holy hush after a long day.

The next morning, after he was dressed, Caleb came over to the sofa and snuggled up to me. I told him I would like to pray for him before he left for school. Then I prayed, "Lord, please give Caleb a better day at school today..." I opened my eyes and Caleb, with his eyes squeezed tight, was shaking his head up and down vigorously, in affirmation and faith. That day God answered. It was a response to the faith of Caleb, taught by his parents.

Whether we have lived 4 years or 94 years, our faith will continue to be nurtured as we gather around the Scriptures and pray together...that's the basics. ■

DILIGENCE. DISCIPLINE. DEVOTION. These bring great returns. The struggle to find answers to family living begins here. As the family gathers daily for Scripture and prayer, the directives for life and its values are being established. Simply put...it is the best guarantee we have for rearing children who will grow to be vibrant Christians, contributing to the church, the community and to the world as a whole.

It need not be called the old fashioned family altar. Call it "back to Christian basics" if you wish. However you view it, see it as a necessity of life. Better yet, the good life.

Children learn early on what comes first with Mom and Dad. Whether it is food or fads, computers or cars, people or passion. God first, Christ supreme should always be the aim of the Christian home.

Trudy McClane is the wife of Jack McClane, executive director of Brethren in Christ World Missions.

On a trip to Zambia

Faces I won't forget

by S. Paul Sides

As we approach the One Hundred Year Anniversary of our African missions, I would invite you to join me as I share a glimpse of the ongoing work and need of the people. I should like this writing to challenge the reader to both go and give to Brethren in Christ World Missions.

I WAS STANDING at the kitchen window of the missions house in Choma, Zambia, watching the children at play in the sandbox under the acacia tree. I had been watching them day after day. I remarked to Eva (my sister-in-law), "It's interesting, I have not heard those youngsters scrapping. They seem to be playing contentedly."

The next morning I went out to where they were playing. I knelt down on the edge of their sandbox and said, "Good morning. May I come into your house?"

They looked up at me with their big brown eyes that said, "Yes, you may come in."

Then I said "Where is the kitchen—I am hungry." At that

moment I realized there were no toys in the sandbox. They didn't need any, for they had partitioned off the rooms with the beautiful blossoms from the acacia tree. There were a few sticks for doors and a long-since discarded *small* tin can for a pot over a pretend fire. Their little make-believe house was nearly empty and I was instantly reminded of our house full of a multitude of unnecessary items that seldom get used.

Well! That's when I had to walk away. The lump in my throat would not let me ask for any breakfast.

The beauty of Africa can scarcely be described. Nor can the poverty. Likewise, the day-to-day activities in both city and rural countryside can only be experienced by a first-hand encounter. One must see, smell and taste the flavor of a country and people whose very existence depends on their ability to glean a living from the land.

ONE DAY WE VISITED Sikalongo Hospital, leaving Choma early in the morning. The day was warm and the sky was clear and bright. Only a few high cumulus clouds floated across the sky.

We were not prepared for the long bumpy ride, but when we arrived, there was a delicious meal waiting for us. The tour of the hospital left some indelible impressions on us.

I would like to draw a picture of three faces I won't forget. First, there is the face of the woman under the bed, with only a blanket to keep her from the damp, cold cement floor. She was on the floor because there were not enough beds. I can't remember the face of the woman on the bed. The second is the face of a man who would die that very day of AIDS. The third is the face and extended tummy of a starving infant. His mother held him tight against a breast that had no nourishment in it because she did not have enough to eat. Beside the bed on a small stand was a can of Similac—food provided by the Board for Brotherhood Concerns of the Breth-

ren in Christ Church. Both mother and child would live. Again, that's when I had to walk away.

Allow these scenes to fill your mind the next time you enter the hospital to visit a friend in your city.

WE GOT BACK TO CHOMA late in the evening. As we entered the driveway to the missions house, I noticed about a dozen boys playing soccer. The boys were about 10 to 15 years old. Again, I noticed the orderly way in which they played.

They didn't seem to need an umpire to enforce the rules; they just played with respect for one another. I couldn't help but notice the ball they were using—only it wasn't a ball. It was a gunny sack rolled up and tied with twine. As some of you may know, soccer is the national sport of Zambia and is enjoyed by all sports-loving fans. As I continued to watch these boys for the next several days, I just knew somewhere in a store there must be a *real* soccer ball. I said to my brother-in-law, "Can't we get those boys a ball?"

"Yes," he said, "but the school doesn't have one either."

Then I said, "Can't we get two balls?"

It wasn't long before those boys were kicking a real ball. I wish you could have seen the face of the first boy who kicked the ball. It nearly flew over the housetop. When you kick a gunny sack, it doesn't go very far. When you kick a real ball, it goes flying.

I STOOD OUTSIDE one clear and cool night (you see, there is no smog in the African skies) and gazed up at the beautiful Southern Cross. I said, "Thank you, Lord Jesus, for putting a reminder in the heavens that you died on the cross nearly 2,000 years ago so that all of the people of all of the nations could have salvation, and that included me."

Paul Sides, Lanesville, Ind., wrote this article after visiting John and Eva Brubaker, who at the time were serving with Brethren in Christ Missions in Zambia.

God at work in our world

Homegoing

Doyle Book—Kitakyushu, Japan

Once again I had the privilege of seeing the Japan Church beautifully in action, this time at the funeral of Brother Goro Shibata, "Mr. Firewood Field," on October 6, 1994.

The funeral service was held at the Hagi Omotomachi Church. It was led by Mr. Okano, a banker and the lay pastor at Hagi. He was assisted by Rev. Nishimura, retired school principal and pastor at Nagato. The service was conducted with sensitivity to the culture but with clear witness to the lordship of the living Jesus Christ, who is the Resurrection and the Life.

The tiny church was packed to the bursting point with family members of the deceased, the owner and several employees of the company where Mr. Shibata had worked, and with loyal, supporting members of the Hagi, Nagato, Takibe, and Shimonoseki churches. The

program for the service was enclosed in a lovely, colorful bulletin cover expressing the beauty of life in Jesus.

When the time came for the viewing, Mr. Okano made a simple statement to the effect that as Christians we do not burn incense or otherwise try to comfort the spirit of the deceased. A white flower had been prepared for each person to lay on the bier as a token of appreciation for the beautiful life of Mr. Shibata, already enjoying fellowship with the Lord of Life.

Mr. and Mrs. Okano had taken off from their jobs the moment Mr. Shibata's condition became precarious, and they provided a total ministry to the Christian widow as well as the non-Christian family members for three full days until the funeral was over. This care included going to the crematorium, holding a brief service there, and waiting for two hours until the body was cremated and the ashes cool enough to be placed in an urn by the family members. The urn was decorated with a vivid white cross. Various church

members also accompanied the family for the cremation vigil.

How privileged I feel to have participated in the vibrant celebration of Mr. Shibata's homegoing. And what delight I feel in seeing the mature, solid leaders of the Japan Church carrying on the life of the church in clear witness to the society in which it lives. I am reminded that this maturity grew from the life-witness and teaching of the former missionaries and that it was made possible by the sacrificial gifts of many North American Christians and by the vision of Brethren in Christ World Missions staff and board.

The faith-building story of Mr. Shibata's early life and conversion is found in a 22-page booklet, *Firewood Field of Japan*, written by missionary Peter Willms in 1968. The booklet is available from Brethren in Christ World Missions for a contribution of \$1.00.

Reaping the harvest

Jim Stauffer—Hagerstown, Maryland

Let me tell you how the Paramount congregation was involved in the Centennial Ingathering. If you recall from the article in the August *Visitor*, each person received \$5 in "seed money" during the April 17 worship service. A total of \$415 was "sown" that day.

On Sunday, September 11, during a missions emphasis weekend with Dick and Ettie Miller, our worship focus was on "Reaping the Harvest." Our missions chairperson, Del Oswald, had made a wonderful altar display, complete with cornshock, pumpkins, crates of apples, veggies, etc., to highlight the theme. A bushel basket for receiving the "harvest" of the congregation was central to the display. As the choir sang, "Bringing in the Sheaves," participants in the project brought their offerings to the altar. At the conclusion of the service, a check for Brethren in Christ World Missions in the amount of \$2,360—the total from the basket—was presented to Dick Miller.

You might be interested in knowing some of the ways people "cultivated and raised the crop" for this unique missions project:

- six families formed a bakery together, taking orders from individuals as well as having a stand at local gatherings with

Brethren in Christ EVANGELISM PRIORITY PROJECT—1995 MIAMI, FLORIDA

THE PROJECT

The goal is to provide \$700,000 to construct a worship, evangelism and training center for the fast-growing Hispanic congregations in Miami.

The Miami congregations have purchased the land on which this facility will be constructed.

THE PLAN

The goal is for each North American congregation and each individual to give a sacrificial offering during the month of March 1995.

All offerings should be completed by May 1, 1995.

THE PROMISE

We praise God for the growth of these Miami Hispanic congregations. Beginning in 1987, with approximately 20 people, there are now 12 congregations with over 1,000 believers and a membership of over 600.

Please plan to make your offering through your local congregation as a great celebration of love for our Hispanic neighbors in Miami in 1995.

a sign that proceeds would be contributed to Brethren in Christ Missions;

- several families had yard sales;
- some children collected aluminum cans for recycling;
- some planted actual seeds and sold garden produce;
- others collected loose change in the months from May to September;
- several children made jewelry and sold it;
- savings from "couponing" at grocery stores were contributed,

and the list goes on. . . . The project involved all ages and created quite a bit of excitement and enthusiasm. We give God praise for the way he allowed each of us to use our talents in serving him creatively in order to give to his kingdom!

No walls

Cathy Bert—Managua, Nicaragua

Nate has been busy planning for the work groups that will come [beginning in March 1995] to help build churches. Last night we attended an evening service in Villa Libertad, a relatively new church-planting. The pastor explained that the community consists of people who spend a few months here in Managua looking for work and then return to their homes in the country. Sometimes, after a few months, they will show up at church again. He said that at one time they had as many as thirty people attending, but now there are only fourteen.

The church has no real building, just a roof and two sides enclosed with whatever was available—rusted zinc, old boards, etc. Since it is now the rainy season, a roofed building with all four sides enclosed would be a bit more comfortable.

Nevertheless, I felt God's presence with us during that service, and I am thankful that God doesn't have boundaries called walls, that God is with us wherever two or three are gathered in his name. ■

World Fellowship Sunday

*for the Brethren in Christ and
Mennonite International family*

January 22, 1995



sponsored by
**Mennonite World
Conference**

North American Congress—May 1995

The Church and the Age Wave

The North American Congress on the Church and the Age Wave is a five-day convocation of professional and lay church leaders concerned with ministry and outreach to aging baby boomers (40-50 years), middle adults (50 to 70 years), and senior adults (70+ years). The congress should be a watershed event in the redefinition of the church's ministry to an aging population. Nationally recognized leaders, futurists, and demographers will serve as presenters. Experienced practitioners will lead a variety of workshops providing models, ideas, and practical steps of strategy. Workshops are provided for denominational executives, local church staff, and volunteers.

The North American Congress on the Church and the Age Wave is intended to help church leaders understand and anticipate changes in local church ministry and outreach that will be necessary as the North American population grows older. This includes: (a) helping participants understand the unique characteristics of unchurched middle and senior adults and what activities are necessary to reach them for Christ and the church, and (b) developing appropriate church-related strategies for ministry to meet the variety of needs represented in an aging church membership.

Need

North America is rapidly aging. Social scientists are convinced this population shift will produce the biggest social revolution in our history. "It's going to be of a significance that matches the dawn of the industrial age or the invention of the microchip," says Ken Dychtwald, author of the popular book *Age Wave*. For church leaders, this "age wave" presents a particular challenge and opportunity. Many pastors are already finding that over half of their congregation is composed of people over the age of 50. Communities around churches will be increasingly filled with unchurched older residents. Effective ministry will require greater insight and priority than was given to planning for adults of previous generations, primarily

because an entirely new demographic age segment is emerging. As a result of this congress, participants will have a better grasp of the issues and answers for effective church ministry as persons in the U.S. and Canada grow older in the 1990s and beyond.

Focus

The congress themes and topics will include:

- What to expect when the first baby boomers turn 50 next year.
- Why today's senior adult groups are not effective in outreach and ministry.
- Why and how evangelism is different for people over 50.
- The four ingredients of a successful adult ministry.
- Why you need a ministry niche for middle adults.
- How to create a new ministry/outreach strategy for middle adults.
- Creative ways to use retirees in mission and ministry.
- Assimilating newcomers into the church family.
- Developing spirituality in the second part of life.
- Demographics: learn what is happening in your church and community
- How to help older adults perpetuate their priorities through endowments.

Dr. Win Arn is honorary chairman of the congress. A widely known and respected authority in the field of church growth, Dr. Arn is president of the New Senior Study Center and LIFE International. His book *Catch the Age Wave* points out that the old paradigms on which most churches operate their senior adult ministry are ineffective, and that new strategies and models will be necessary for reaching the new generation of aging North Americans.

The congress is scheduled for May 1-5, 1995, at the Glen Eyrie Conference Center, Colorado Springs, Colo. For more information, write or phone LIFE International, 1857 Highland Oaks Drive, Arcadia, CA 91006, phone (818) 355-2470. ■

Church News

Allegheny Conference

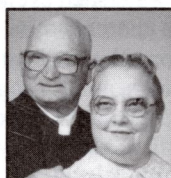
Wendy Martin and Lynn Witmer were guest speakers for the **Air Hill** congregation, Chambersburg, Pa., on Nov. 6. A Youth Evangelism Team shared in the Nov. 27 service. ● Bill Itzel was in concert Nov. 20 at the **Antrim** church, Chambersburg. Clothing for Africa was the emphasis of the Nov. 23 service. ● Forty youth and adults from the **Chambersburg** church attended the Nov. 18 concert at Hershey Arena of the Newsboys and Steven Curtis Chapman. ● The Living Fire group of the **Fairview Ave.** church, Waynesboro, Pa., enjoyed a video night on Nov. 11. The quarterly concert of prayer was Nov. 20. ● On Nov. 4 the **Five Forks** congregation, Waynesboro, hosted the Allegheny Conference retirement dinner for H. Frank Kipe.

Over \$18,000 was raised Nov. 20 toward the remaining debt on the Family Life Center of the **Hollowell** church, Waynesboro. ● Guest speakers in November for the **Iron Springs** congregation, Fairfield, Pa., were Ray Martin, Nov. 6, and Arthur Climenhaga, Nov. 20. ● The **Martinsburg**, Pa., church received gifts of \$225 recently for Prison Fellowship's Angel Tree Project. The congregation saw the film "Come the Morning" on Nov. 13. ● The **Montgomery** church, Mercersburg, Pa., had a Nov. 12 special offering for the stocking stuffer project at Messiah Village. ● Six people were baptized in November into the fellowship of the **New Guilford** congregation, Chambersburg.



On Nov. 13, 1994, the Fairview Brethren in Christ Church, New Cumberland, Pa., held a dedication service for their renovated facility. Phase I of the congregation's "New Life" building project in 1990-93 saw an addition to the north side of the sanctuary, a lower level Christian education center and new parking lot. Phase II was a new entrance on the south side. Phase III, a \$44,000 project completed this year, involved a new heating system and refurbishing the sanctuary, including a new audio-visual system. Pastor Simon Lehman Jr. reports that an offering of \$7,368 was received at the time of dedication, and "we dedicated the facilities 'debt free.' Praise the Lord!"

On Nov. 6 the **South Mountain Chapel** congregation, Shippensburg, Pa., saw the video "Seeds for the Harvest." ● On Nov. 22 the ladies aid group of the **Springhope** church, Schellsburg, Pa., made eight fruit and cookie baskets for widows of the community. ● The Wingert Family Singers participated in the Dec. 4 service at the **Van Lear** church, Williamsport, Md. Paul Hostetler presented his missions program on Nov. 13. ● Mark and Eleanor Slagenweit of the **Woodbury**, Pa., congregation celebrated 50 years of marriage with an open house on Oct. 15, hosted by their two children, Faithe Keefer and Mark Jr. The couple was married Oct. 22, 1944, by Bishop Jesse S. Oldham.



Atlantic Conference

The **Conoy** church, Elizabethtown, Pa., began Pioneer Clubs with an average attendance of 44 last fall. A benefit auction on Nov. 12 earned \$7,665 toward building indebtedness. ● The **Cross Roads** congregation, Mount Joy, Pa., had a Thanksgiving Day 8:30 a.m. service of singing and sharing. ● The youth of the **Elizabethtown** church raked community lawns on Nov. 5. The Hoffman family offered a service of music on Nov. 19. ● On Nov. 4 the **Fairland** congregation, Cleona, Pa., saw the film "God's Outlaw" about

the life of William Tyndale. The youth had a spaghetti dinner fundraiser on Nov. 19. ● The **Free Grace** congregation, Millersburg, Pa., began first and third Sunday morning prayer times on Nov. 19. Musician Chris Cowgill was featured at the Nov. 18 Thanksgiving banquet.

Musicians and speakers Ron and Holly Hostetler and family led the Nov. 12-13 family life services at the **Lancaster**, Pa., church. Youth speakers were Elizabeth and Lance Edwards. ● Christine Wyrzten was in concert Nov. 20 morning and evening at the **Manor** church, Mountville, Pa. ● Ric Feeney led evangelistic services Nov. 5-8 for the **Mastersonville** congregation, Manheim, Pa. Bishop Hoffman spoke on Nov. 13. ● The annual Christmas dinner of the **Millersville**, Pa., congregation was planned for Dec. 11. The quiz team is busy studying John. ● The women of the **Montoursville**, Pa., church had a Dec. 1 secret sisters party at the Herrfort home.

The **New Covenant** congregation, Quakertown, Pa., had a surprise 40th birthday party for Pastor Joe Hyatt with a gift of a fully-paid trip to the Holy Land in spring 1995. ● Six persons were baptized recently into the fellowship of the **New Joy** church, Akron, Pa. Thirty-seven charter members were recognized Nov. 6. ● Jay Sisco led the Nov. 13 missions conference service of the **Palmyra**, Pa., church. The women's fellowship visited the SELFHELP craft store in Ephrata on Dec. 9. ● On Nov. 6 the **Pequea** congregation, Lancaster, enjoyed an evening of music with guest organist Adele Haritonoff. Esther Spurrier spoke on missions Nov. 20 to the Sunday school classes. ● The **Perkiomen Valley** church, Collegeville, Pa., recently observed Firefighters Appreciation Day with a meal and fire truck in the parking lot for the children to explore. Tom Holland was in concert Nov. 6.

The women's ministries of the **Refton**, Pa., church had their Christmas boutique fundraiser on Nov. 11-12. ● Six persons were baptized and 23 new members received by the **Silverdale**, Pa., church on Nov. 6. ● A special schedule Nov. 20 for the **Skyline View** congregation, Harrisburg, Pa., was 9:30 worship; 10:30 brunch; and 11:30 congregational council. ● Photos were taken Dec. 1-2 for the new directory of the **Soud-**

erton, Pa., congregation. The Jr. High youth attended the Nov. 23 Point of Grace concert. ● The men of the **Stowe**, Pa., church had breakfast at the parsonage Nov. 5. ● The women of the **Summit View** church, New Holland, Pa., recently studied the book *Created Female*. Esther Snyder led a teacher training event on Nov. 13.

Canadian Conference

The Nov. 12 craft and bake sale by the **Bertie** church, Stevensville, Ont., netted \$450 toward a clubs program van. Oct. 23 was the last Sunday for Associate Pastor Mark and Ruth Ann Thornton (pictured), who are beginning a pastoral assignment at Cedar Heights congregation in Pa. Nov. 1 was the first weekly women's morning out for study, crafts, and fellowship. ● On Oct. 30 the puppets from Images performed "Andrew the Fisherman" for the **Boyle** congregation, St. Ann's, Ont. ● The **Bridlewood** church, Agincourt, Ont., had a 12-hour prayer vigil on Nov. 5. The youth experienced a 30-hour famine Nov. 25-26. ● Bishop Shaw spoke the evening of Nov. 6 to the **Delisle**, Sask. congregation. The Billy Graham film "Scars That Heal" was shown Nov. 20. ● The **Falls View** church, Niagara Falls, Ont., hosted a life saving course Nov. 7 and 10.



Bruce and Merly Bundy from Spain spoke Nov. 3 to the **Heise Hill** congregation, Gormley, Ont. ● On Nov. 6 the **Kindersley**, Sask., congregation viewed the missions film "Wait of the World." ● On Dec. 11 the **Kingswood** congregation, Barrie, Ont., began meeting in their new location on Saunders Road. ● The **New Life** congregation, Collingwood, Ont., had their stewardship celebration banquet on Oct. 30. Paul Hostetler brought his missions presentation on Nov. 2. ● The **Oak Ridges**, Ont., congregation met in the St. John's Anglican Church during renovations. Myron Hoover spoke and one new member was received during the Nov. 27 evening service.

On Nov. 6 Pastor Kathy and her husband Bob Leadley debated the question "Is War Ever Justified?" during the morning message. Nov. 20 was Family Sunday with speak-

ers Fred and Heather Gingrich. ● On Nov. 12 the **Port Colborne**, Ont., church hosted a concert by the Southern Gospel Quartet. A "great envelope auction" was held at the Nov. 19 carry-in meal with proceeds to Operation Uplift. ● The **Ridgemount** congregation, Hamilton, Ont., received four new members on Nov. 6. The film "Come the Morning" was shown Nov. 4.

David Woodcock led evangelistic services Nov. 5-6 for the **Rosebank** congregation, Petersburg, Ont., on the theme "So What About Jesus Christ?" One person was baptized Nov. 13. ● The youth of the **Sherkston**, Ont., church had an evening of ice skating Nov. 4. ● The **Upper Oaks** church, Oakville, Ont., planned a "Discovering Church Membership" evening Nov. 11. The congregation co-sponsored an Old Testament Walk Through the Bible seminar Nov. 4. ● The **Niagara Community Male Chorus** gave a benefit concert Nov. 20 at the **Wainfleet**, Ont., church in support of Niagara Christian College. ● The **Westheights** church, Kitchener, Ont., had "Celebrate the Family" weekend Oct. 29-31.

Central Conference

A skating and pizza party was planned for Nov. 12 by the **Amherst** church, Massillon, Ohio. Mystery Inn was the theme of the Christmas dinner. ● The **Ashland**, Ohio, congregation recently heard Lee and Ann Winger speak about their call to tentmaking ministry in Bangkok, Thailand. ● A praise, Communion, and footwashing service was Nov. 20 at the **Beulah Chapel** church, Springfield, Ohio. ● The **Carland-Zion** congregation, Owosso, Mich., recently heard a concert by The Majestics, and viewed the videos,



Highland's Nov. 5-6 missions festival included two presentations on India by Bijoy Roul; music by 12 adopted children of Becky Karns, missionary to Haiti; presentations by Jack and Trudy McClane; two skits by the Highland Players; an international carry-in dinner; and an "International Parade" by the children of the congregation (pictured above).

"A Man Called Norman" and "The Growth of the Gospel in Miami."

Bishop Byers preached in the Nov. 13 service of the **Christian Union** congregation, Garrett, Ind. A meal followed. The church hosted the community Thanksgiving service. ● On Oct. 29 the deacons of the **Fairview** church, Englewood, Ohio, organized the youth and adults to do fall work at homes of the elderly and needy of the congregation. ● The **Highland** congregation, West Milton, Ohio, has chosen Ernie Weber as next pastor, to begin in spring 1995. ● More than 70 persons attended the Harvest Celebration Nov. 20 of the **Lakeview** congregation, Goodrich, Mich. The Billy Graham film "Scars That Heal" was shown Nov. 27.

The **Nappanee**, Ind., congregation raised \$40,000 in cash and pledges in November for annex property indebtedness reduction. Messiah College President Rodney Sawatsky spoke on Dec. 11. ● The **Northgate** fellowship, Tipp City, Ohio, has a new sign and shrubbery. Five youth are on the new quiz team. ● One person was baptized recently into the **Peace Chapel** congregation, Ravenna, Ohio. Twenty-two youth attended the opening hayride activity on Nov. 19. ● On Nov. 6 John and Ruth Pawelski reported on the ministry in Russia to the **Pleasant Hill**, Ohio, congregation. ● The **Union Grove** church, New Paris, Ind., hosted a joint Communion service Nov. 16 with the **Christian Union** congregation. ● The Chapel Belles of the **Valley Chapel** church, Canton, Ohio, met Nov. 15 for a Christmas crafts workshop.

Midwest Conference

The **Abilene**, Kan., church has a Promise Keepers men's group which listens to the organization's tapes and receives copies of the magazine *The Man*. The congregation saw a film Nov. 20 on John Wesley. ● Sarah Zoschke was in concert Nov. 6 at the **Bethany** church, Thomas, Okla. The congregation hosted the Nov. 20 Oklahoma church growth dinner. ● The family of the late Ethel Lutz Butler gave *Hymns for Praise and Worship* to the **Mound Park** church, Dallas Center, Iowa. The hymnals were dedicated Nov. 6. ● The **Oklahoma City**, Okla., church has new classes for two- and three-year-olds. ● In November the **Rosebank** church, Hope, Kan., began family nights each Sunday evening for worship and fellowship. ● The **Zion** congregation, Abilene, Kan., hosted the Nov. 18-19 meeting of the Midwest BECP. A Dec. 4 offering was for Lois Raser's Mexico ministry.

E.V. Timelines

100 Years Ago

Jan. 15, 1895 issue—Noah Zook reports on his evangelistic campaign in Ontario, Canada: "I left Black Creek on the first of the New Year, and am now at Wainfleet, where I find a membership of some twenty souls. They seem to be an earnest little band of workers, with Bro. John Sider as their minister....From here, I go to Waterloo Co., for a stay of two weeks, my route and work being laid out for me by the Canadian Mission Board. I realize that the Lord is caring for me and he helps me in the work....So far, we have been favored with rather mild winter weather. We have had a little snow and prospects for more."

75 Years Ago

Jan. 12, 1920 issue—Editor V. L. Stump: "A retrospective glance into the past for a moment might not be unprofitable, for by it we can perhaps trace the cause of some of the failures that have come to us along life's pathway. It is not well, however, to look long into the past for this will surely bring discouragement to the stoutest heart and only cast shadows on the future....The *Evangelical Visitor* has had what we might consider a fruitful year. ...The expressions of appreciation have been many. The criticisms were just about enough to salt our daily bread and have enabled us to realize that we were far from the ideal standard of religious journalism."

50 Years Ago

Jan. 29, 1945 issue—"Bish. O. B. Ulery will broadcast over the nationwide radio chain of the Blue Network [*predecessor of the ABC network*] on Friday morning, Feb. 9, from 8:15 to 8:30 a.m. Eastern War Time. The sponsors have requested a devotional message, rather than social, political or otherwise. The program will originate in the Springfield studios and be rebroadcast from the New York studios. This is the opening for which some of us have long hoped and prayed. We trust that it may develop into a permanent program. Be sure to write in and commend the radio officials for this type of program."

25 Years Ago

Jan. 25, 1970 issue—"The Rev. Philemon Khumalo, present Superintendent of Matopo District in the Brethren in Christ Church in Rhodesia, was chosen at the General Conference of the church in Africa to succeed Bishop Alvin Book, whose five-year term expires April 1970....To nationals and missionaries alike, the election for the first time of a national as Bishop is a forward move regarded with satisfaction and thanksgiving to God."

10 Years Ago

Jan. 1985 issue—Howard F. Landis Sr., in "Thoughts on the stewardship of time": "Time...is a gift of God. It belongs to God. Man is only a steward of it. Time is one of the most valuable things in life, greater far than any material thing....It has been said that four things [do not] come back: a spoken word, the sped arrow, time past, and neglected opportunity. May the Holy Spirit guide us in the use of time."

Please note that church correspondents and secretaries should be submitting bulletins only once a month, arriving in Nappanee on or before the first day of each month.

Pacific Conference

The **Chino, Calif.**, church had a ladies' Christmas crafts night Nov. 17. • The **Ontario, Calif.**, church hosted the area's annual Advent Sing on Nov. 27. • A visit Nov. 13 to the **Pacific Highway** church, Salem, Ore., by Bishop Brubaker included a meal after services. • The film "Jesus," seen worldwide by over 500 million people, was shown Nov. 13 at the **Upland, Calif.**, church. • The **Walnut, Calif.**, congregation sponsored a CPR class on Nov. 19.

Southwest Conference

The **Bloomington Chapel** church, Columbia, Ky., recently received six new members, making a total of 13 this year. A crowd of 135 enjoyed the October Homecoming services. • Art Dasher, executive director of Christian Service Center, was Nov. 13 speaker at the **Holden Park** church, Orlando, Fla. The children of the congregation helped dis-

tribute Christmas cards. • The **Winchester, Va.**, congregation enjoyed Thanksgiving dinner together on Nov. 20. Dana and Judy Crider visited on Dec. 18.

Susquehanna Conference

Nov. 13-20 revival services with Luke Keefer Sr. at the **Big Valley** church, Belleville, Pa., ended with a healing service on the 20th. • Sr. High members of the **Carlisle, Pa.**, church helped serve a meal Dec. 4 at the Carlisle Soup Kitchen. On Dec. 11 the Sr. Choir presented "The King of Love." • The youth of the **Cedar Grove** congregation, Mifflintown, Pa., led a hunger awareness evening service in November. • On Oct. 30 Mark Thornton was installed as pastor of the **Cedar Heights** church, Mill Hall, Pa. The Messiah College Singers led worship on Nov. 20.

The **Dillsburg, Pa.**, congregation hosted a Nov. 12-13 Family Values and Sexual Relationships conference with Curt and Marti Byers. • The 40th anniversary celebration of the **Fairview** church, Reesers Summit, Pa., culminated Nov. 13 with music, messages by Charlie Byers and Henry Ginder, a dedication ceremony with Bishop Hawbaker, and Thanksgiving dinner. • "Vayan!" was the title of the **Grantham, Pa.**, church's missions conference Nov. 2-6 with guest Samuel Escobar and numerous special activities. • Magician/ventriloquist James Herman ministered in the Nov. 20 evening youth service of the **Hanover, Pa.**, church.

Insurance Position

Mennonite Aid Plan of the Pacific Coast (a fire and casualty company), is looking for a dynamic general manager with experience in marketing to the insurance industry. Knowledge of reinsurance, industry reporting requirements, and ability to motivate people are critical. Résumés accepted until February 15, 1995. Position will be filled prior to June 1, 1995. Offices located in Reedley, CA, serving five western states. Qualifications and job description are available upon request. Salary and benefits commensurate with experience and education. Reply to Vern Warkentin, 18685 E. Floral Ave, Reedley, CA 93654.

The youth of the **Jemison Valley** congregation, Westfield, Pa., sponsored a spaghetti dinner Nov. 28. Eddie Piper was in concert Dec. 4. • H. Frank Kipe led a New Life series Nov. 5-6 for the **Locust Grove** congregation, York, Pa. • Charles Lehman was guest speaker for the Nov. 13 Communion service of the **Marsh Creek** church, Howard, Pa. • John Dawson, author and founder of YWAM, was speaker for the Nov. 6-7 missions festival of the **Mechanicsburg, Pa.**, church. • The **Redland Valley** church, York Haven, Pa., had a Nov. 11-13 couples' retreat with Bob and Donna Sheetz on the theme "And the Two Shall Become One." • Pastor Brubaker of the **Roseglen** church, Duncannon, Pa., preached at the Nov. 23 community Thanksgiving service.

For The Record

Births

Bontrager: Cory Austin, Oct. 8, 1994; Ron and Angie (Kline) Bontrager, Antrim congregation, Pa.

Burton: Emily Anne, July 7, 1994; Eddie Dean and Annetta (Streeval) Burton, Bloomington Chapel congregation, Ky.

Cober: Kristen Rose, Nov. 10, 1994; Neal and Beverley (Good) Cober, Westheights congregation, Ont.

Cole: Courtney Lynn, Nov. 13, 1994; Brad and Sharon Cole, Zion congregation, Kan.

Conrady: Jonathan Lynn, Nov. 2, 1994; Jeff and Lois Conrady, Dillsburg congregation, Pa.

Egolf: Shaun Alan, Nov. 13,

1994; Terry and Kathy (Besecker) Egolf, Five Forks congregation, Pa.

Gearhart: Nakita Amber, Sept. 21, 1994; Rick and Deanne Gearhart, Antrim congregation, Pa.

Guyer: Kelsy Rae, Oct. 24, 1994; Steve and Laura (Soubrier) Guyer, New Guilford congregation, Pa.

Hagey: Marcus Vaughn, Nov. 24, 1994; Michael and Denise (Canning) Hagey, Silverdale congregation, Pa.

Herr: David Hans, Nov. 21, 1994; Marvin and Shirley (Siegrist) Herr, Pequea congregation, Pa.

Hixson: Connor Scott, Oct. 9, 1994; Owen and Alicia Hixson, Woodbury congregation, Pa.

Hunt: Kaleb Jordan, Sept. 19, 1994; David and Joyce (Cranford) Hunt, Jemison Valley congregation, Pa.

Lichty: Jordon Shawn Douglas, Oct. 7, 1994; Douglas and Kathy Lichty, Blairs Mills congregation, Pa.

MacDonald: Brianna Allison, Oct. 10, 1994; Ross and Helen (Wideman) MacDonald, Oak Ridges congregation, Ont.

Martin: Brogan Skylar, Oct. 21, 1994; Robert and Tessa (Beegle) Martin, Antrim congregation, Pa.

Martin: Sean Caleb, Nov. 9, 1994; Kevin and Shari (Caufman) Martin, Montgomery congregation, Pa.

McQuait: Mark Jonathan, Nov. 17, 1994; Edgar and Karen McQuait, Hollowell congregation, Pa.

Miller: Natalie Dawn, Sept. 16, 1994; Allen and Traci (Parks) Miller, Martinsburg congregation, Pa.

Milligan: Christopher David, Nov. 1, 1994; Kevin and Sarah

Christian Light Bookstore Manager Opening New Store - York, Pa.

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Elizabethtown, PA 17022

(Grace) Milligan, Elizabethtown congregation, Pa.

Mosbarger: Margaret Cole, Oct. 30, 1994; Neal and Cecile Mosbarger, Northgate congregation, Ohio.

Murr: Derek Nathaniel, Nov. 10, 1994; Bob and Lois Murr, Mt. Rock congregation, Pa.

Myers: Leah Marie, Oct. 15, 1994; Christopher and Donna Myers, Van Lear congregation, Pa.

Reely: Caleb Matthew, Sept. 27, 1994; Rich and Louise Reely, Green Grove congregation, Pa.

Romero: Peter Daniel, Nov. 19, 1994; Sergio and Virginia Romero, Grantham congregation, Pa.

Seitz: Ashley Ann, Nov. 8, 1994; Steve and Paige (Pierce) Seitz, Nappanee congregation, Ind.

Watkins: Clayton Ward, Oct. 28, 1994; Denny and Linn (Masters) Watkins, Marsh Creek congregation, Pa.

Weaver: Maureen Joy, Nov. 21, 1994; Jeff and Laura Weaver, Mechanicsburg congregation, Pa.

Weidman: Darren Michael, Nov. 14, 1994; William and Bonnie (Bomberger) Weidman, Manor congregation, Pa.

Yeagy: Cody Lee, Nov. 13, 1994; Brian and Amy Yeagy, Mt. Rock congregation, Pa.

Correction from November issue: *Jacob* Louis, Aug. 24; James and Lorinda (Cober) Fortner.

Weddings

Brandis - Cowels: Tami Cowels and Jason Brandis, son of Tom and Regina Brandis, Aug. 13, 1994, at the home of the bride with Rev. Joe Hyatt officiating.

Brantner - Garling: Camilla Garling, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Ray Garling, Newville, Pa., and Lewis Brantner II, son of Mr. and Mrs. Carl Brantner, Lurgan, Pa., Oct. 8, 1994, at Carlisle Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Terry Hoke officiating.

Climenhage - Fretz Heise: Miriam Elva Fretz Heise and Ernest Climenhage, Oct. 21, 1994, at the home of Wilmer and Velma Heisey, Mt. Joy, Pa., with Rev. Wilmer Heisey officiating.

Cober - Perez: Maria M., daughter of Manuel and Aida Perez, Alhambra, Calif., and Sheldon Ray, son of Louis and Ruth Cober, Alhambra, Calif., Nov. 12, 1994, at Pasadena Covenant Church with Rev. Louis O. Cober officiating.

Epps - Good: Lori, daughter of Allen and Helen Good, Elizabethtown, Pa., and Gregory, son of James and Nancy Epps, Elizabethtown, Nov. 5, 1994, with Rev. Wayne Judd and Rev. Donald Stauffer officiating.

Emmell - Horvat: Margaret Mary Horvat, Sellersville, Pa., and Frank James Emmell, Sellersville, Oct. 29, 1994, at Silverdale Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Frederick L. Geib officiating.

Gayman - Johns: Karen, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Gary Johns, Orrstown, Pa., and Rodney, son of Mr. and Mrs. Garnet Gayman, Pleasant Hall, Pa., Nov. 5, 1994, at King Street United Brethren Church with Rev. Patrick Jones officiating.

McKeever - Michajluk: Susan Marie, daughter of Jay and Linda Michajluk, Greencastle, Pa., and Scott William, son of William and Dianne McKeever, Illinois, Oct. 15, 1994, at Antrim Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Steven Munger and Rev. Ky Searcy officiating.

Mardis - Miller: Anita Jill, daughter of Gaylerd and Marlene Knight Miller, Mansfield, Mo., and Jason Allen, son of Carl and Cordie Sinclair Mardis, Campbellsville, Ky., Nov. 5, 1994, at Knifley Chapel Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. J. Timothy Lewis officiating.

Miller - Romig: Stephanie, daughter of William Romig, Elizabethtown, Pa., and Diane Romig, Elizabethtown, and Jason, son of Rodney and Mary Ferne Miller, Elizabethtown, Oct. 22, 1994, at Congregational Bible Church with Rev. Marlin K. Ressler officiating.

Strite - Nicholson: Shirley Nicholson, Chambersburg, Pa., and Carl Strite, Fayetteville, Pa., Oct. 15, 1994, at Air Hill Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. James Sollenberger officiating.

Waters - Tyson: Tara Tyson, Shippensburg, Pa., and Curtis Waters, Chambersburg, Pa., Nov. 19, 1994, at Air Hill Brethren in Christ Church with Rev. Gerald Wingert officiating.

Obituaries

Burkholder: Vera Mae Burkholder, born June 20, 1904, in Lost Springs, Kan., daughter of Joseph and Priscilla Hostetter Fike, died Oct. 25. Surviving are her husband, Alvin Burkholder; a son, Charles; a daughter, Phyllis Keller; four granddaughters; two great-granddaughters; and a sister, Ida Ringey. She was a model pastor's wife, a constant and beautiful presence in the services of the church, and a keeper of the home while her husband ministered throughout the brotherhood and abroad. During 15 years of illness, she demonstrated courage and witnessed to the power

of prayer. The funeral was held at the Upland church, Calif., with Rev. Robert Hempy and Rev. Graybill Brubaker officiating. Entombment was in Bellevue Mausoleum.

Donovan: Francis J. Donovan, born Aug. 9, 1902, died Oct. 28. He had no surviving relatives. Francis was a retired farmer. He enjoyed painting and giving his paintings away. He also was an avid Civil War student who liked visiting the battlefields. Francis was a member of the Manor church, Pa., where the funeral was held with Rev. Robert L. Sheetz officiating. Interment was in the church cemetery.

Eisenhour: John H. Eisenhour, born Mar. 10, 1922, son of Robert and Carrie Eisenhour, died Aug. 26. Preceding him in death was a daughter, Donna. Surviving are his wife, Dorothy (Moyer); a son, John E.; two daughters, Dorothy Garman and Joanne Rhine; a brother, Edward; and three sisters, Dora Hetrick, Carrie Miller, and Edith Miller. John was a retired custodian from Milton Hershey School, a veteran of World War II, and a member of the church visitation committee. The funeral was held at the Skyline View church, Pa., where he was a member, with Rev. John G. Rietz officiating. Interment was in Woodlawn Memorial Park.

Hocker: Elwood C. Hocker, born Apr. 24, 1918, son of Arthur and Margie Brosey Hocker, died Nov. 8. Surviving are his wife, Anna M. (Zeiger); a son Elwood C. Jr.; a daughter, Julie Newcomer; four grandchildren; and three brothers, Malcolm, Harold, and Martin. Elwood was retired as a shipping and receiving clerk for the former Landy Towel and Linen Service. He was a veteran of World War II, serving in the U.S. Army in Europe and receiving five battle stars. The funeral was held at the Manor church, Pa., where he was a member, with Rev. Robert L. Sheetz officiating. Interment was in Conestoga Memorial Park.

Keppler: Charles G. Keppler, born Mar. 8, 1923, son of David R. Jr. and Mary Jane Messerman Keppler, died Sept. 26. A brother and a sister preceded him in death. Surviving is a sister, Dorothy Nicholas. Charles was a member of the Sunshine Class of the Cedar Grove Sunday School, Pa. He was employed by Green Gables, Lewistown. He was a member of the Evangel Baptist Church. Services were held at graveside with Rev. John Terice officiating. Interment was in Birch Hill Cemetery.

Negley: Florence G. Negley, born Mar. 11, 1895, died Nov. 22.



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Lord, send the rain!

Cooperative Ministries

Receipts—Year to Date

January 1 – November 30, 1994

	1994	1993
Proportionate	2,173,075	2,174,980
Congregational	1,971,390	2,016,420
Individual	201,685	158,560
Designated and Direct Giving	705,944	667,174
Congregational	417,963	342,732
Individual	287,981	324,442
Total to Date	2,879,019	2,842,154
Total Budget	4,093,469	4,210,537
Received to Date	70.4%	67.5%

Sadly, we often become so comfortable and self-sufficient in our lives that God must take drastic measures to bring us to the point of being willing to change.

That was me. I spent my life taking just enough of God to get by, never enough to make my life uncomfortable or for God to really have an effect on my living. I also gave like that, just enough to get by. It was very easy to give in that manner. For many of us, we don't mind at all giving in our times of plenty. But what about giving in our times of want?

Several months ago, my "plenty" became "want." My entire world came loudly crashing down around me. Everything I had worked so hard to attain and accumulate was gone or would soon be: my marriage, my children, my family, my friends, my home....everything that was "mine." I truly had hit rock bottom. But to my wonderful surprise, God was waiting for me at the bottom, waiting for me to fall into his loving, comforting, sustaining arms.

As God and I began this new walk together, one of the first things he showed me was that all these "things" that were "mine" were never really mine at all. They were his, and I had failed as a steward of what he had given me. During this time of picking up the pieces, God showed me that I needed to tithe and begin to give back to him. I had tithed before, but that was different. I could afford to then. In obedience to God, I began to tithe again, even though now it hurt to give that ten percent.

Several months later, I was faced with beginning child support payments. This was a real dilemma. This money was just simply not available. My financial resources had been completely exhausted by the burdens and circumstances of the last six months. Given no choice, I began making these payments, all the time trusting that God would supply the shortfall.

I began reasoning that God would surely understand why I could no longer tithe, given my present situation. But the Lord led me to 1 Kings 17:7-24, the story of the widow of Zarephath. This woman was in dire straits. She was literally at the bottom of the barrel, with only enough flour and oil to make some bread for her son and herself. Then they were going to lay down to die. Well, along comes this traveling prophet Elijah and asks her if she might get him a drink and perhaps some bread. She very emphatically explains her situation and Elijah comforts her with this promise: "The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord gives rain on the land." In obedience, she did what Elijah asked and God miraculously provided for her and her son.

My reasoning with God had just been blown out of the water. I knew I must obey and continue to give, even though now I was giving that which I did not have. (It was in these times I began praying for "the day the Lord gives rain" on some of my land.)

A strange thing began to happen. Every week, as I deposited my pay check and paid my now insurmountable bills, the balance of my account did not go down as it had before. My first reaction was to look into it. Surely there must be a mistake; perhaps some checks didn't go through. The Lord stopped me again and reminded me that my "flour and oil were not going to be used up until the rain comes."

Weeks later, I sat in a camp meeting service. As an appeal was given for funds, I said to God, "You know, I'd love to give more if I could, but it just isn't possible. I am giving you my tenth now. " The very next morning, I was given an unexpected and very generous bonus at work. Once again, I began to reason with God, saying, "You really don't want ten percent of all that...do you?" He did, so in obedience, I gave.

As I look back, I realize how selfish and pious I had been, giving ten percent in a time when it was so easy and so affordable. You know, there was no joy in giving that way either. God has truly shown me the joy of giving. It's so easy now because God provides and controls the resources entrusted to me. I need only to be obedient to him.

Perhaps you are considering cutting back your giving—or stopping altogether—because of financial hardships right now. Don't. Step out in obedience. For this is what the Lord the God of Israel says: "The jar of flour will not be used up and the jug of oil will not run dry until the day the Lord gives rain on the land" (1 Kings 17:14). I've been there; God will provide; your "rain" will come!—Anonymous

Preceding her in death was her husband Grover Negley. Surviving are 3 sons, Paul, John, and Jesse; 5 daughters, Eleanor Mummert, Janet Craumer, Dorothy Pyles, Mary Zeiders, and Ivy Bankert; 37 grandchildren; 64 great-grandchildren; 24 great-great-grandchildren; and several stepgrandchildren and stepgreat-grandchildren. Florence was a member of the Mechanicsburg, Pa., church. The funeral was held in Lewisberry, Pa., with Rev. Kenneth Hepner officiating. Interment was in Emanuel Cemetery.

Snyder: Charles W. Snyder, 57, son of George W. and Mary S. Eckman Snyder, died Nov. 13. Surviving are his wife, Thelma M. (Hanna); three sons, Charles L., Ronald L., and Dennis E.; a daughter, Nancy M. Lease; three grandchildren; four stepgrandchildren; three brothers, Willis, Paul, and Kermit; and two sisters, June Raihl and Peggy Snyder. He had worked as a carpenter's helper for Alumax Mill Products for 28 years, and a truck driver for the former Hollingers Meat Co. and Penn Stone. He had donated time to Children's Miracle Network Telethon, the March of Dimes, and the East Petersburg fire dept. He served in the U.S. Army in 1956. Charles attended the Manor church, Pa. The funeral was held at Charles F. Snyder Funeral Home with Rev. Robert L. Sheetz officiating. Interment was in Millersville Mennonite Cemetery.

Spangler: Earl K. Spangler, born Feb. 3, 1917, died Nov. 12. Preceding him in death was his wife, Evelyn E. (Noblet); and a daughter, Carol Ann. Surviving are his wife, Elizabeth (Gantz); three brothers, two sisters, and numerous nieces and nephews. He attended the Palmyra congregation, Pa. The funeral was held at Rothermel Funeral Home with Rev. Louis O. Cober officiating. Interment was in Blue Ridge Memorial Gardens.

Thomas: Michael A. Thomas, born Dec. 29, 1963, son of John W. and Florence N. Dirk Thomas, died Nov. 5. Surviving are his wife, Rhonda K. (Martin); a daughter, Keisha M. Thomas; three brothers, David W., John W. Jr., and Richard E.; a grandmother, Hazel Binkley; and four nieces and a nephew. Michael was employed as a machinist at Precision Manufacturing and Engineering Co. He was a member of the Montgomery congregation, Pa., and an avid hunter and fisherman. The funeral was held at the church with Rev. Curtis Bryant officiating. Interment was in the church cemetery.

Wingert: Chester F. Wingert, born Feb. 6, 1913, son of Milton W. and Clara M. Garber Wingert, died Nov. 18. Preceding him in death were his wife, Ruth E.; and a brother, Gilmore. Surviving are two sons, Donald L. and L. Eugene; a daughter, Lois E. Einolf; four grandchildren; five brothers, Avery, Blaine,

Raymond, Laban, and Gerald; and three sisters, Pearl Hostetter, Verda Wolgemuth, and Helen Gruber. Formerly from the Chambersburg area, Chester was a resident of Messiah Village. He had been a missionary in Zimbabwe and a business manager for Eastern States/Agway. He was a member of the auxiliary of Kenbrook Bible Camp and a member of the New Guilford congregation, Pa. A service was held at Messiah Village with Rev. Robert Lehman and Rev. Alvin Book officiating. The funeral service was held at New Guilford with Rev. Robert D. Verno and Rev. Alvin Book officiating. Interment was in the New Guilford church cemetery.

Tribute

Chester Wingert was a faithful servant of God, serving for 22 years as a pastor and missionary. His pastoral assignments were at Houghton Mission in Ontario, and Ringgold Church, Md. His missionary work included heavy and varied responsibilities as mission superintendent, superintendent of schools, and bookstore manager.

Chester was a conscientious Christian worker. He carried out his duties willingly, with a good spirit, and with a friendly, winsome smile. In all of his ministry assignments his wife Ruth supported him and served with him as a co-laborer for Christ.

Regarding those who work hard in ministry of leadership in the church, the Apostle Paul said, "Hold

them in the highest regard in love because of their work" (1 Thess. 5:13). We therefore hold Chester Wingert in the highest regard in love, and we thank God for Chester's life and ministry.

John B. Hawbaker, Bishop
Susquehanna Conference

Wolgemuth: Lester H. Wolgemuth, born Jan. 22, 1920, son of Irvin M. and Anna Hostetter Wolgemuth, died Nov. 23. Preceding him in death was his first wife, Anna (Sload); and a sister, Alma Engle. Surviving are his wife, Ruth A. Gingrich (Keefer); a daughter, Charlotte Ann Lefever; two sons, Lonny and J. Dallas; stepsons, James, Rahn, and John Keefer; stepdaughters, Esther Nguyen and Doris Smeltz; 6 grandchildren; 2 great-grandchildren; 12 stepgrandchildren; 8 step-great-grandchildren; a brother, H. Earl; and 3 sisters, Ruth Heisey, Anna Martha Wingert, and Ethel Kreider. Lester was a church trustee for many years. He volunteered at Kenbrook Bible Camp, Paxton Street Home, and Messiah Village. He retired from farming in 1969, worked for Rooftruss Engineers from 1969-1982, and for Mount Joy County Homes from 1989-1994. He was a member of the Cross Roads congregation, Pa., where the funeral was held with Rev. Dale H. Engle officiating. Interment was in the church cemetery.

High marks for MCC from magazine, other charities

Mennonite Central Committee moved from fifth-best relief and development agency last year to second this year in *Money* magazine's annual ranking of the efficiency of various U.S. charities.

More significant, perhaps, is the acknowledgement MCC received from the heads of other relief and development agencies.

This year *Money* magazine asked the heads of 111 large U.S. charities to rate their peers anonymously. Only a third did so.

"Those who did cooperate, however, gave consistently high marks to two lesser-known relief and development charities we thought you should hear more about: Mennonite Central Committee and Habitat for Humanity International," *Money* magazine reports in its December issue.

"We're honored by the peer-rating," said John Lapp, MCC executive secretary. "Our ranking in *Money* magazine will likely go up and down over the years, but our peers see the long-term results of our work. They see our workers and volunteers in action."

He pointed out that the magazine ranks organizations according to the percentage of income actually spent on overseas programs. The more sent overseas and the less spent on support staff and expenses, the better. In MCC's case, the percentage will vary significantly, depending on the amount of material resources like food and clothing shipped out in a given year.

Lapp credits the efforts of thousands of volunteers at both the community level and within the organization for the high efficiency ranking MCC receives. There

is also an ongoing financial commitment from congregations, community groups and individuals that makes a lot of fundraising unnecessary.

"Much of the work is already done for us at the community level. People give us their time. They organize relief sales. They make soap and quilts. They donate goods to our shops selling second-hand goods."

Why isn't MCC ranked number one? "We shouldn't be," said Lapp. "We're a people-intensive organization. We don't simply collect money and resources in North America and ship them overseas. We aim to be efficient, but we also need to adequately support our staff in offices on location."

MCC is the relief and development agency of the Mennonite and Brethren in Christ Churches of North America. Founded nearly 75 years ago, the agency currently has about 900 people working in 50 countries around the world.

MESSIAH COLLEGE NEWS

Messiah College to participate in national assessment project

Over the next four years, Messiah College will be asking its students about their values: those they entered with, those they're leaving with, and those they have as alumni a few years later.

Messiah College's efforts are part of a collaborative assessment project coordinated by the Christian College Coalition and funded by a \$220,000 grant from the Fund for Improvement of Postsecondary Education (FIPSE). For the first time, a group of colleges will band together to assess the value of a Christian college education.

"This grant represents the culmination of an intensely competitive process," said Coalition vice president Dr. Karen Longman. "In 1994 FIPSE funded only 72 of 1,900 proposals received. We are excited to be among those 72 and to have the prestige of FIPSE funding to support this major assessment initiative."

The project's title is "Taking Values Seriously: Assessing the Mission of Church-Related Higher Education." Over the next four years, 20 Coalition member colleges will study freshmen, seniors, alumni and faculty using a variety of



Brethren in Christ Moderator Rev. Harvey R. Sider was part of the inaugural ceremony for Dr. Rodney J. Sawatsky as seventh president of Messiah College on November 19. Rev. Sider, flanked by a Messiah board member and the student body president, is holding the processional staff which symbolizes Messiah College's ideal of leadership rooted in service.

tools, including nationally-normed surveys and videotaped interviews of freshmen which will be repeated in their senior year.

Project designer Dr. Bayard Baylis, associate dean for curriculum at Messiah College, explains: "The grant is going to help us take a long and hard look at whether our colleges are doing what they claim to be doing." While all schools are implicitly engaged in values development, Christian colleges quite explicitly

have as their mission the character development of their students.

Dr. John Van Wicklin, director of institutional research at Houghton College (N.Y.), says one of the biggest pluses of the projected study is that it will give each of the participating colleges a better normative base for understanding their student populations. They will be getting data that compares students at similar institutions, sharing assessment tools with one another, and doing more networking to learn how better to serve their students.

The Christian College Coalition is an association of 88 colleges and universities rooted in the liberal arts and sciences and committed to integrating scholarship, faith, and service.

Looking? Plan to spend a day at Messiah

Prospective students and their families are invited to spend a day at Messiah this semester. Several special open houses have been planned. These days start with registration in the Eisenhower Campus Center at 9:00 a.m. Included in the program are academic and financial aid information sessions, campus tours, and a complimentary lunch with faculty and students.

Open house days for all areas of study are Monday, February 20, and Saturday, March 4.

Open house days for specific areas of study are Friday, February 3, for engineering, mathematical sciences, and management and business; and Friday, February 10, for nursing and natural sciences.

There will also be a special program for students from minority ethnic backgrounds on Minority Awareness Day, Monday, January 16 (Martin Luther King Day). In addition, a special day for college-bound juniors is scheduled for Monday, April 17.

If you don't see a date here that's convenient for the whole family, call the Admissions Office at (717) 691-6000 to set up your own time to visit.

Messiah again included in "Best Buy" guide to higher education

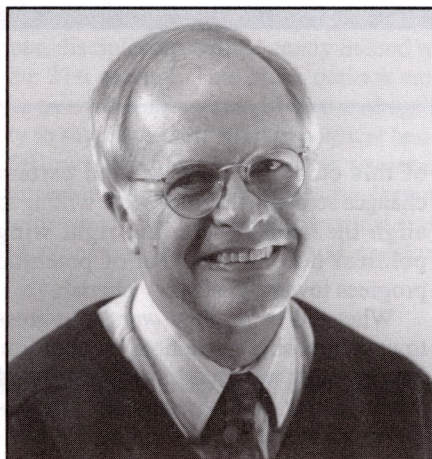
Messiah College, along with eight other colleges in the Christian College Coalition, is among the 299 top colleges and universities from the United States to be selected for inclusion in the recently released third edition of *Barron's Best Buys in College Education*. Other CCC colleges included in the guide are Bluffton College (Ohio), Calvin College (Mich.), Gordon College (Mass.), Goshen College (Ind.), Houghton College (N.Y.), Taylor University (Ind.), Westmont College (Calif.), and Wheaton College (Ill.).

There are more than 3,000 accredited degree-granting higher education institutions in this country. Messiah was also included in the first two editions. Tuition at Messiah College this year is \$10,300, approximately \$1,200 less than the average at four-year private colleges in the U.S.

According to Barron's, *Best Buys* "is a guide to 299 myth-breakers, schools that breach the supposed link between college price and college quality. Although some of them are better known than others, all deserve recognition where it counts: in the performance of the faculties and depth and comprehensiveness of their curricula, the preparation of their students for lives after graduation, and the prices they charge for their services."

With the average tuition at a private four-year college exceeding \$11,000 in the 1993-94 academic year, and rising at a rate of six percent a year, parents are likely to experience "sticker shock" in the college market of the 1990s. *Barron's Best Buys* looks beyond the nation's best-known and most expensive four-year colleges to discover schools where the education dollar goes further, often with results that give their more prestigious peers a good run for their money.

Barron's contains the latest information on tuition, admissions standards, financial aid, academic programs, campus life, and the student body. The comprehensive data is based on questionnaires answered by the dean of students, admissions officer, and a student from each school. Each of the schools listed consistently received high marks in terms of



Grantham Church Pastor Robert Ives, also the college pastor and a part-time faculty member, is an editorial council member for the Believers Church Bible Commentary Series. The commentaries are a joint effort of six denominations. Six volumes have been published so far, and publication of the series is expected to extend well into the next century.

faculty attention to students, inspiring and useful programs, and opportunities for personal and professional development. Some schools offer low tuition. Others are relatively expensive, but offer Ivy League quality without the high price of Ivy League. The book's chatty and informal style makes it an easy-to-read and unique guide to help beat the cost of a college education. ■

MESSIAH COLLEGE Faculty Openings

Continuing faculty position in New Testament in fall 1995.

Ph.D. required. Preference given to candidates who have demonstrated ability to teach New Testament effectively to students who are not Bible majors. Assignment includes courses in both general education and departmental curriculum.

Continuing faculty position in Theology in fall 1995.

Ph.D. required. Position primarily focused on teaching introductory level (general education) courses in theology that articulate the basic ideas of historic Christianity.

Messiah College seeks candidates who affirm historic Christian orthodoxy and who can support Anabaptist/Pietist/Wesleyan expressions of that faith.

Send letter of inquiry, CV, and brief (one page) statement of faith to:

Dr. John R. Yeatts
Biblical and Religious
Studies Department
Messiah College
Grantham, PA 17027

Minorities and women strongly encouraged to apply. AA/EOE

Focusing our Mission

continued from page 30

about stretching reality to extend beyond the existing state" (*The Power of Vision*, page 29).

Vision cannot stand alone: it leads to action. From the biblical people cited above we see that vision calls for response. That response may involve humbling ourselves and making confession before God. It certainly calls for faith and obedience. At various times it means work, waiting, fighting (the right enemies, of course, and with the right weapons) and perseverance.

Vision outlasts any one person. From the biblical characters we learn

that our actions have long consequences and that we are participants in a drama that extends far into the future. In fact, some people live to see only the very first steps of their vision implemented; the rest must be taken up by future generations.

This article, while it deals with the subject of vision, has not yet attempted any definition of it. There are, of course, many ways of defining or describing vision, and you may have your favorite, but you may at least want to consider this one by George Barna: "Vision for ministry is a clear mental image of a preferable future imparted by God to his chosen servants and is based upon an accurate understanding of God, self

and circumstances" (*The Power of Vision*, page 28).

In the Brethren in Christ Church we need to give attention to vision at every level. Denomination leaders, pastors, church boards and other individuals should seek God, look at the big picture, think vision, formulate vision, and do the work that logically grows out of that God-given vision. When the Leadership Council was together in October 1994, we worked on this very thing and will do so again at our next meeting in January 1995.

When you look at your life, our church and our world in the light of who God is, what do you see? ■

Dialogue

The following article was submitted for "Discipleship in the 21st Century" but seemed more appropriate for the "Dialogue" page.

Election 1994: A victory for Christianity?

There is no denying that the U.S. election of 1994 resulted in major changes in leadership at national, state, and local levels. We do well to evaluate these changes and subject them to the scrutiny of a biblical perspective. Readers in other countries will pardon, I hope, the United States focus of this article. Perhaps they can glean some ideas pertinent to the societies in which they live.

It's apparent that many conservative Christians are delighted with the results

of this election. They wanted certain changes so badly that they were willing to align themselves with the right wing political tide for the sake of potential progress toward goals they cherish.

What did or do they want? Progress toward imposing restrictions on abortion. Hope toward renewed acceptability of public prayer in public schools. Legislators who might reject funding for blasphemous and/or pornographic art. Hope of public funds (vouchers) to underwrite private parochial education of their children. Reduction of the role of the federal government in favor of increased role of state government. A legislature committed to reform of the welfare system. (As a Christian who takes seriously the teachings of Scripture, some of those changes seem desirable to me.)

Did they get what they wanted? Obviously, the answer is "yes." It must be noted, though, that the real goals they desire are not yet reality, even though progress toward those goals has been made.

But what price was paid to achieve these modest, potential gains toward the goals? What did we really get in this election "package"? For one thing, we got ourselves committed to right-wing politicians who will now ask a price for their continued support of our goals. We also gave political structure, power, and future to a *zeitgeist* [spirit of the times] characterized by selfishness, materialism, individualism, and rejection of the holy living which our God requires. (Yes, I do at times listen to talk shows, although it's embarrassing to reveal that I've heard what's said on those shows.)

We also got a national legislature which seems, by its early rhetoric, likely to reduce benefits for the poor faster than they'll provide opportunities and empowerment. We got national leaders eager to give tax breaks to the wealthy while promising to reduce the deficit by reducing services and benefits to the poor. We got a Speaker of the House who in 1980 visited the hospital bed of his cancer-stricken wife to work out details of a divorce (*Wall Street Journal*, 11/21/94). We got a chairman-to-be of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee who vows to terminate the investigations of the tobacco industry. It is significant that Philip Morris is the biggest employer in

Bliley's district, and that Bliley has received more tobacco money for his political purposes in the past seven years than any other U.S. representative (*New York Times*, 11/22/94).

We got a NRA gleefully expecting its \$3.2 million investment in Republican candidates to pay off by producing a reversal of the ban on assault weapons (*Newsweek*, 11/28/94). We got alcohol industry lobbyists no longer concerned about new taxes on their products because new Chairman of Ways and Means Archer (R-TX) and new Majority Leader Armey (R-TX) oppose increasing the tax burden on alcohol products (*Newsweek*, 11/28/94). We got a strengthened congressional contingent which believes health care does not need reform. We got a chairman-to-be of the Senate Armed Services Committee who wants to increase military spending.

That, folks, is all in the package we got. It's therefore probable that true discipleship of Jesus will be more difficult and costly in the 21st century. There will be more need for charity and fewer people inclined to practice it. There will be more cigarette and alcohol-induced illness requiring health care at public expense, or depending on charity to obtain it. There will be more military hardware to become obsolete. There will be rising violence if weapons are deregulated, and as the gap between rich and

Readers Respond

Thanks for the reminder note on renewing the *Visitor*. I have already done that through our Fairland church office.

Now that I have your ear, please note: We started receiving the *Visitor* in 1943, and to the best of my knowledge I have an unbroken run of copies up to the present time. According to present plans and thinking, we may be living at Messiah Village by next spring. Therefore it is time to unload this collection of information and inspiration. I would like to give it to a student or a new congregation or some research writer.

If you know of a recipient, then please inform that person and myself. If you have no leads at all, then do not bother with an answer. The collection will have to go to the landfill.

John Bicksler
Lebanon, PA

If you are interested in this collection of the *Evangelical Visitor*, please contact our office: P.O. Box 166, Nappanee, IN 46550. Phone (219) 773-3164.

Contributions Invited for *Dialogue* and *Readers Respond*

Persons contributing to *Readers Respond* (letters to the editor) are encouraged to be concise. Letters may be shortened. All letters must be signed. Occasionally we may decide to withhold names due to special circumstances.

Longer contributions are welcomed for *Dialogue*, a forum for readers to express their opinions on a broad range of topics relevant to the mission of the church and to living the Christian life.

Each article or letter represents the view of the writer, and does not necessarily reflect the official position or policy of the Brethren in Christ Church or this periodical.

poor widens further. And those Christians who take Jesus seriously as Lord of their life will experience greater opposition from Christians whose ethics are shaped primarily by right-wing politics.

There is no doubt that America's conservative Christians got what they wanted in politics in 1994. The sobering question is: Did they want what they've got-

ten? If their answer to that question is yes, discipleship will be costly indeed in the 21st century. That bleak outlook can be averted if they can muster the integrity to say no to their strange political bedfellows; if they can combat societal unrighteousness with the same fervor with which they oppose the personal sins of others; if they adopt moral suasion

rather than political power as their primary strategy for change; if they minister effectively to the needs of the poor rather than condemn them for their sins.

Will they be able to rescue their own movement, or have they sold their soul in pursuit of a few small gains?

Samuel M. Brubaker
Arcanum, Ohio

Onesimus

Dear Paul,

It's hard to believe that it's a new year already. I wonder what the Lord has in store for us in this next one. This past year has certainly been one of transition as I left Philemon in Colosse and moved to the other side of the country to take my first real job. I'm working on a couple of projects similar to the aqueducts in Rome. Not too bad for an ex-slave, eh? It's fairly interesting, but I'm not sure if it's what I want to do on a long term basis. Somehow I can't see myself staying here for more than a couple of years; maybe I inherited your itch to travel.

I'm a little unsure of the future now that I'm out on my own. You know that I've been thinking about going overseas and that I've slowly been acquiring the skills I need. In fact, the aqueduct work I'm doing now is directly related to what I want to do overseas. But to be honest, Paul, I'm starting to get impatient, even though I realize that the Lord is still teaching me things here. And I may be a little afraid that I misunderstood him seven years ago when I decided what to do with my life.

Does it matter what I'm doing as long as I'm walking with the Lord? I've talked with some people who think that God doesn't have an "individual" will for anyone's life, only a "moral" will of how we are to live. How should I interpret your letter to the Ephesians when you said, "For we are God's

Does it matter
what I'm doing
as long as I'm
walking with
the Lord?

workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do"? Did you mean a generic sort of good works for Christians in general, or was it more individualistic?

I've always been reluctant to use the phrase, "the will of God," but I have always believed that God does have an individual plan for everyone's life. How can we read either the Old or New Testament and believe otherwise? Of course, you have your Damascus road experience and it's recorded in Acts that you were chosen by God for a specific reason. Why should the rest of us be excluded from being used directly and specifically by God? Of course, he could be using me without my being aware of it.

Paul, you have often used the analogy of running the good race. However, most runners know the exact course as well as the rules and finish line location. I suppose the important thing is finishing the race according to the rules. Pray that I'm on the right path if there is such a thing. Moreover, pray that I continue to enjoy the run itself. I suppose that as long as I'm walking with God, I don't need to know exactly where I'm going.

Your son in the faith,
Onesimus

Each January we reveal the identity of the previous year's "Onesimus." In 1994 Jay McDermond, Assistant Professor of Christian Ministry at Messiah College, was the author of the column.

When asked to consider writing this column, I readily agreed. Evidently I was suffering a temporary lapse of sanity. My family and close friends are hoping I soon experience a full recovery. As for my view of the situation, I enjoyed it.

I suggest my agreement was due to a lapse for two reasons. First, I hadn't actually thought through the fact that just about anything I would say could probably offend someone. I suppose this is the risk

of writing for a group as theologically diverse as the Brethren in Christ. In addition, I tend to be somewhat "aggressive" when addressing issues which strike me as central to my (and our?) identity. Only a "nutter" would willingly place himself in such a situation.

Secondly, I have never written a series before. Believe me, this differs significantly from a sermon or academic paper. The writer faces the "tyranny of the relevant," or at least I felt I faced that beast. At the same time, I am convinced that a good writer avoids the mundane. Place those two together and finding a topic for September is a challenge—all the good ideas on "back to school" have been taken!

Oh, I just thought of another reason why I must have been demented. I am convinced that obscurity is a gift from God. To write in every issue of a given volume of the *Visitor* surely put that gift in jeopardy. I hope you forget who I am. Thanks.

All in all, I am thankful for the opportunity to be Onesimus XII. I pray the edges were not so sharp as to mortally wound any readers. At the same time, I hope a paper cut or two were inflicted.

Jay McDermond

All we can say now about 1995's Onesimus XIII is that she (or he) represents the younger Brethren in Christ population—editor.

Focusing our Mission

What do you see?

by John B. Hawbaker

Seeing with our eyes is a wonderful gift from God. We marvel at the beauty, color and motion of the world around us as we use our eyes. But seeing with our minds is an even greater gift.

That is what is involved in a vision for the church—seeing things in our minds or hearts, things that are not yet reality but are still in the future.

The ability to see in this way is a God-given capacity. It is a gift that some people have in a greater degree than others, or that a given person may have in a greater measure at certain times or in certain situations. The Bible is full of stories of people with a vision.

Abraham, at God's invitation, looked at the night sky, and God promised Abraham that his (Abraham's) descendants would be as numerous as the stars. At the time Abraham had no children, but a new idea, or vision, was born in Abraham's mind that night.

At the burning bush in the desert, Moses met God and heard God's commission that Moses should lead the people of Israel out of Egypt into freedom. Years later, as Moses stood on Mount Nebo on the last day of his life, God gave him a vision of all the land of Canaan, which the Israelites would enter and possess.

Joshua saw a vision of the tribes of Israel settled in their various sections of Canaan, and he spent the rest of his life leading the tribes in carrying out the work and warfare necessary to see this vision become reality.

King David had the idea of building a temple to replace the tent or tabernacle as a place for the Israelites to meet with God and worship him. It was David's son Solomon who actually built the temple, but the vision started with David.

Visions are not always pleasant and positive. Jeremiah saw visions of God's judgment coming upon Judah because of the nation's wickedness in forsaking God and worshiping idols.

Nehemiah had a vision of a completed wall surrounding Jerusalem, so he organized the people to accomplish that task.

Esther, challenged by her cousin Mordecai, had a vision of her whole nation spared from destruction, and she risked her life to bring a petition to King Xerxes.

Peter had a vision of a large sheet filled with both clean and unclean animals, and later he saw clearly that God's vision of the church is of one body uniting both Jews and Gentiles.

Paul's vision of what God wanted to do through him was expressed in various ways at various times. At Paul's conversion Jesus himself told Paul that he would be sent to the Gentiles to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light. On one occasion Paul said that his vision or goal was to make himself a slave to everyone to win as many as possible to Christ. On another occasion he said that his vision was that he and the other workers would be able to present everyone perfect in Christ.

The participants in the Council at Jerusalem, in Acts 15, discerned together a vision of Gentiles participating fully and freely in the church and not having to submit to Jewish ceremonial practices.

From the experiences of these people in the Bible we can learn a lot about vision.

Vision comes from God. Every one of the characters above had an encounter with God, and it was out of that encounter that the person saw himself or herself in a new way and saw what God wanted to do in the world.

Vision may come to an individual or a group. In most of the cases above it was an individual who got a vision from God. However, in the story of the Jerusalem Council and in other cases, a group heard a word from God and together came to a sense of vision.

A vision is for a particular situa-

tion. The vision that King David had was quite different from Abraham's or Nehemiah's. While there are some points of similarity in God-given vision, the vision is specific for a particular time and place.

Vision looks to the future but honors the past. Every character cited above was keenly aware of God's working in the past, but at the same time each one saw what God wanted to do in the present and future.

Leaders communicate their vision to the larger group. We see this happening in each story. A vision is not to be kept private, but is intended to be told to your children or shared with an appropriate group or declared to the whole world. C. Peter Wagner comments regarding the role of vision in a pastor, suggesting that "there is no substitute for a vision which has gripped the pastor so overwhelmingly that everyone who comes into contact with him or her is bound to catch part of the vision. Visions are caught more than taught" (*Leading Your Church to Growth*, page 195).

Our vision for congregational life today must include people meeting God in a meaningful and life-changing way. Leith Anderson observes: "People tell me they are looking for a church where they can meet God, where there is the power of the Holy Spirit, and where their lives can be radically changed. We have a generation that is less interested in cerebral arguments, linear thinking, theological systems, and more interested in encountering the supernatural" (*A Church for the 21st Century*, page 20).

Vision means change. All the characters in the biblical stories above experienced profound changes—in their thinking, relationships, and ways of doing things. It will be the same for us when we get a vision from God. George Barna says, "Vision is never about maintaining the status quo. Vision is

continued on page 27

John Hawbaker is bishop of the Allegheny and Susquehanna Regional Conferences of the Brethren in Christ Church.

Editorial

IN SEARCH OF THE SACRED," a recent cover article in *Newsweek* magazine, chronicles the quest for religious meaning sweeping North America. "Maybe it's a critical mass of baby boomers in the contemplative afternoon of life. Or anxiety over the coming millennium. Or a general dissatisfaction with the materialism of the modern world. For these reasons and more, millions of Americans are embarking on a search for the sacred in their lives" (*Newsweek*, Nov. 28, 1994).

One evidence of this search for the sacred is the current fascination with angels. A year ago, some 100 books about angels were in print; as we enter 1995, some 30 more have hit the bookstores or are nearly ready to be released. Television shows, Broadway plays, and movie theatres feature angels. Glass and ceramic angels fill catalogs and store displays across North America.

As disciples of Jesus Christ, what are we to make of this current "angel mania"? On the one hand, we can affirm the quest of those who are experiencing a thirst for divine truth, who realize there is more to life than that which meets the eye. And since the Bible contains numerous references to angels (spirit beings who are active in doing God's work on earth), we can't deny their existence.

I am concerned, however, that much of the current preoccupation with angels is more of a "lucky rabbit's foot" approach to religion than it is a deep hungering for a right relationship with the Living Lord. Thus we have the popular concept of the personal guardian angel who protects us in an accident-filled and violence-prone culture while not making any ethical or moral demands. (I've never understood a "rabbit's foot" approach to life...life certainly wasn't lucky for the rabbit in question!)

Terry Mattingly, of the Scripps Howard News Service, writes that the message coming through such movies as "Angels in the Outfield" is that "people need to believe in something supernatural, and it doesn't matter what they call it." He quotes one of the characters in the movie: "You've got to have faith. You've got to believe. You've

Got an angel on your shoulder?

got to look inside yourself." Mattingly observes that "This is precisely the kind of warm, fuzzy language that makes some religious leaders fear that today's angels are unorthodox, New Age spirits disguised as stained-glass images....Others fear that focusing on angels allows people to create cozy, domesticated, personalized gods. For centuries, angels were seen as messengers for a Holy God. Today, they seem to be all-forgiving therapists" (*South Bend Tribune*, August 27, 1994).

The lead articles in this issue of the *Visitor* explore in greater depth the current fascination with angels. You and I should realize that as we meet people who express their interest in angels, we have a golden opportunity to introduce them to the One whom the angels serve—the Creator of the universe and the Lord of our lives. It may be that the Holy Spirit will use our testimony to move people from a passing fascination with angels to a life-changing encounter with Jesus, the risen Lord. G

WE ARE PLANNING FOR AN ISSUE OF THE *VISITOR* later this year to focus on various perspectives of the pastoral ministry. You are invited to add your voice to a "Round Table on the Pastoral Ministry." How has your pastor touched your life? How could congregations be more affirming and supportive of pastors? What words of advice would you give to pastors seeking to be more effective? What areas of concern do you have as you look at the pastoral ministry across the Brethren in Christ Church?

All letters must be signed, and preferably will be typed. We plan to publish edited excerpts from as many letters as space allows. Mail your comments by April 1 to:

"Pastoral Ministry Round Table"

Evangelical Visitor

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Future Forecast

Eternal Hope and Judgment

The final destiny of all things lies in God's hands. In God's time, creation will be renewed in Christ.

The kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our Lord, and he shall reign forever.

End of the Age and Return Of Christ

The return of Christ in power and glory is certain and may occur at any time. We accept the Lord's teaching that no one knows when he will come. We understand Scripture to teach that the conflict between God and Satan, good and evil, will intensify as we approach the end of this age.

At Christ's return, the enemies of God will be conquered and the reign of God will be established forever.

The promise of our Lord that we shall live eternally in his presence brings great encouragement to the people of God. Our response is joyous expectation, watchfulness, and diligence.

*from the Brethren in Christ
Articles of Faith and Doctrine*

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